



Exodus 4-6

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Exodus chapter 4. God is looking for a volunteer to go and stand before the Pharaoh, representing God, and demanding the release of God's people. God has chosen a man who is eighty years old, who knows well the Pharaoh's court. He spent his first forty years there. He knows the protocol. He has spent his last forty years, however, as a shepherd, watching his father in law's sheep there in the wilderness of Midian. But there God has spoken to him out of the burning bush, and God is still speaking as we come into chapter 4.

Moses, first of all, protests his own inability's. To that, God answers that He will be all sufficient for Him. He protests that the people won't believe that God sent him, then he protests that the Pharaoh won't listen to him, and again, he protests his own inefficiency. And then finally, you get to the heart of the issue, "I just don't want to do it, LORD." It's amazing how many times we go around the bush, and really, right at the bottom of the whole issue is, "I don't want to." And so we see as the LORD eliminates the excuses one by one, he finally gets to the real problem: "I just don't want to do it."

Then Moses answered and said, But, suppose they will not believe me, or listen to my voice: suppose they say, The LORD has not appeared to you.

You know, it's amazing how many of the projects of God are halted because of "supposes." 'But suppose this,' and, you know, people can imagine more problems. Now, I guess that's part of the difference between being an optimist and a pessimist. A pessimist has the capacity of seeing every kind of a situation that might arise. Something comes along and I'm gung-ho, 'let's go for it,' and my wife says, "But have you stopped to think: what about this? What if that should happen? What if this should happen?" And she's got more supposes...And so God put us together to balance, because I would get into all kinds of messes unless I'd stop to think about the "supposes" sometimes.

And so Moses is figuring out everything that might go wrong: "Suppose, LORD, they'll say to me, 'Ah, the LORD didn't really appear to you.'" So to this objection, the LORD says,

What have you got in your hand? And he said, A rod. It was the shepherd's staff. That staff that the shepherd always carried as he was watching the sheep. Just the rod. And the LORD said, Cast it on the ground. So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. The LORD said to Moses, Reach out your hand, and take it by the tail. And he reached out his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: And God said, That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you. 'So if they question, if they doubt, then just throw your rod on the ground.' First sign. Now the LORD said, Put your hand in your bosom. So he put his hand in his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. The flesh was rotted; it turned white as rotten flesh will do. And He said, Put your hand in your bosom again. So he put his hand in his bosom again; and drew it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was restored like his other flesh. Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. So God is giving to him some signs by which the people may know that indeed, God has appeared to him. And it will be, that if they will not believe these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river, and pour it on the dry land: and the water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land. Then Moses said to the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent.

You see, God erased the excuses of "what if they say the LORD didn't appear to you?" So, God gets rid

of that excuse. “I’ll be with you, I’ll work signs, I’ll prove that I indeed appeared to you.”

But Lord, I’m not eloquent, neither before, nor since you have spoken to your servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. So the LORD said to him, Who made man’s mouth?

Here I see Moses, as he is complaining because of his inability to articulate words clearly: “I cannot talk very clearly;” what he is saying: “heavy”, or “dull of tongue”, more literally. “I’m not eloquent, I’m slow, I’m heavy of tongue: slow tongue.”

Who made man’s mouth? or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

Difficult passage of Scripture: as God here declares that He is the one who has created the mute, the deaf, the blind. He takes the responsibility for these physical handicaps. God is here sort of putting Himself in a position of jeopardy of being accused by man of not being just or fair. And yet, He has a purpose in all things. God has made me as He has made me for His own purposes. I may have impediments. I may have genetic disorders, genetic weaknesses, and yet, God has a purpose in it all. I’ve even come to accept that God has a purpose in my being bald, whatever that purpose may be.

Moses said, “I’m not eloquent, I’ve got a heavy tongue.” God said, “*Who made your mouth, who makes the mute, who makes the deaf, who makes the blind? haven’t I made them?*”

Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth, and I will teach you what you shall say. But he said, O my Lord, please, send someone else. So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said, Is not Aaron the Levite you brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you: and when he sees you, he will also be glad in his heart.

So, Moses is now trying to back out of the task completely. “*Lord, send by whomever else You will, don’t send me.*” I sometimes wonder why God chose to use men to do His work. Imperfect. You know, it seems to me He could have done such a better job with an angel. You know, at the time of Ezekiel, the LORD said, “*I sought for a man among them, who would stand in the gap, who would fill in the hedge: and I found none. Therefore my judgment had to come.*” God was looking for a man to intercede for the people: one who would stand before God, and the people: and intercede on their behalf. And there was none. And, therefore, the judgment of God came against them. I wonder how many times God is searching for a man and can’t find one. Here was Moses; all of the excuses that Moses is offering to the Lord, and as the LORD answers the excuses one by one, he finally gets to the place and says, “*Lord, send someone else.*” So, Moses, at best, is reluctant to be God’s instrument. And so, God said: concerning Aaron, “*He’s coming out to meet you: he’s able to speak.*”

Now you shall speak to him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be your mouth, and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he will be your spokesman to the people: and he himself, shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs. So God is just laying it out straight to him at this point. So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said to him, Please, let me go, and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive. He’s been gone for forty years, no doubt a lot of them are no longer alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace. And so the LORD said to Moses in Midian, Go, return to Egypt: for all of the men are dead who sought your life. Then Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand. And the LORD said to Moses, When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in your hand: but

I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.

So God is saying, “Go, but you’re going to have a tough time. I’m going to harden the heart of the Pharaoh. He’s not going to let the people go, it’s not going to be an easy task.”

Then you shall say to the Pharaoh, Thus says JEHOVAH, Israel is my son, my firstborn: so I say to you, Let my son go, that he may serve me: but if thou refuse to let him go, indeed, I will kill your son, your firstborn.

So, these are the words that Moses is to pass on to the Pharaoh. Israel is God’s son, His firstborn. “*Let them go, and serve me: or I’ll kill your son, your first born.*”

And it came to pass on the way at the encampment, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at Moses’ feet, and said, Surely you are a husband of blood to me. So the LORD let him go: then she said, You are a husband of blood, or a bridegroom of blood, because of the circumcision.

Now here is Moses: he is to be God’s instrument in bringing to the people the deliverance out of Egypt, and then also, to bring to them the law of God. When God commanded the circumcision as a badge for the people of God, “*All of the males are to be circumcised*”, God said that if they weren’t circumcised, they were to be cut off from Israel. Actually, you were not an Israelite because you were born into the family, you were an Israelite once you became circumcised. Otherwise, you were cut off from being a part of that family.

Now, when Moses’ first son was born, they probably circumcised him because the indication here is that there was only one son that was circumcised. Which would indicate that the other one had already been circumcised. His wife, being from Midian, no doubt, did not like the whole idea. When her second son was born, she probably objected to Moses circumcising the second son. And Moses was a very meek person, he’s not one to fight, and so he probably said, “Oh, well, all right”, and let it go.

Now, he is on his way to do the work of God and to represent God before God’s people. But he had neglected the commandment of God in the circumcision of the second son. And so, the LORD met him and sought to kill him. That is, he probably had some kind of a seizure, perhaps he had a heart attack. Just how, the Scripture does not indicate; but his wife knew exactly what was going on. When she saw her husband in the death throws, she knew what was happening; and she took a sharp stone, and circumcised the second son. But she wasn’t happy about the whole thing. She threw the foreskin at Moses’ feet and said, “*You’re a bloody husband to me.*”

Now, it would appear that at this point, that Moses sent her and the boys back to her father: for we do not find Moses’ wife or sons again until they come out of Egypt, and they come to meet him as he comes into the area of Midian with the children of Israel. So, there was probably the tension over this whole thing, and Moses allowed them to go on back to her father, because they’re not mentioned at all in the record until they come out.

So the LORD let him go: then she said, You’re a husband of blood or a bridegroom of blood, to me, because of the circumcision. And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. So he went, and met him on the mountain of God, and he kissed him. So here, these brothers who had not seen each other for a long time, Moses and Aaron, meet and greet each other. So Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all of the signs which He had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of

Israel: And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses, then he did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped.

And so, one of the fears that Moses had, “They won’t believe that You sent me, they won’t believe that You appeared”, is alleviated as Aaron and Moses meet with the elders. They show the signs that God had given: the rod turned to a serpent, and the water to blood, and the leper’s hand. *The people believed, and they bowed their heads and worshipped because God had remembered them.*

CHAPTER 5

Now afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus says Jehovah God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness. That they might offer a sacrifice. And Pharaoh said, Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know Jehovah, nor will I let Israel go.

So now Moses begins to face a real challenge: God said, “I’m going to harden his heart, he’s not going to let you go.” The first response of the Pharaoh is very negative: “*Who is Jehovah, that I should obey Him?*” The Egyptians were polytheistic: many, many, many gods: the sun god, the moon god, the various stars, the planets, the forces of nature, the rain god, the wind god, the Nile River. “*Who is Jehovah?*” ‘Throwing a strange god at me; I don’t know Him.’ “*Who is Jehovah, that I should obey him?*” ‘He’s not one of my gods.’

Moses identified Him as the God of Israel. It so happens that He is the only true God; every god that the Pharaoh was worshipping were false gods. There is only one true and living eternal God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

A lot of people talk about God. You really don’t know who they’re talking about. When a person says, “Well, you know, God...” Well, who? George Burns? And to some people, silly as it may sound, he’s their idol. They adore that DOM. It’s strange, the things that people will idolize.

So, the Pharaoh: “*Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice?*” A lot of people are saying the very same thing today. “Who is Jesus that I should submit my life to Him?” “*Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice?*” ‘I’ll do my own thing, I’ll do as I please.’ God has told us how to have a happy life: how to have a long, healthy, prosperous life. He’s given the rules; but people say, “*Who is Jehovah, that I should obey Him?*” ‘I’ll do what I please.’ But, in our refusal to obey Jehovah, we are only courting disaster in our own lives. And so, the Pharaoh is going to discover who Jehovah is; as we get into our lessons next week and deal with chapters 7, 8, and 9, the Pharaoh will be discovering just who Jehovah is.

So they said, The God of the Hebrews For the Israelites were commonly known as the Hebrews to the Egyptians, has met with us: please, let us go three days’ journey into the desert, and sacrifice to the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said to them, Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? get back to work yourselves.

It is interesting that they have found bits of clay tablets that were the work records of the Egyptians: and in these clay tablets they find the names of the individuals that were working, and the amount of bricks that they had made, and then the days that they had off. And with the day off, the reason why they took the day off. And in some cases, his wife was sick; or in other cases, he was too weak to work. And then there are

cases where they took the day off for a religious feast. Because the Egyptians did worship so many gods and were rather superstitious, taking a day off to worship your god was a legitimate reason for a day off. So what Moses and Aaron are requiring is not something that was uncommon to the Egyptians; but the Pharaoh is openly defying the command of the LORD and orders Moses and Aaron to go back to work themselves.

And Pharaoh said, Look, the people of the land are many now, and you make them rest from their labor. So the same day the Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick, as before: let them go out and gather the straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before; you shall not diminish it: for they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.

So the Pharaoh increased the burden on the people. Up to this time the Egyptians have provided the straw for the bricks. Now the Pharaoh said, “They’re idle; they don’t have enough to do, let’s make them work harder.” Their quota has to remain the same, but they’ll have to go get the straw for themselves; “we’ll no longer provide it.”

Let more work be laid on them, that they may labor in it; let them not regard the false words. And the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, went out and spoke to the people, saying, Thus says Pharaoh, I’ll not give you straw. Go, get yourselves straw where you can find it: yet none of your work will be diminished. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw.

Now, in the archeological diggings, in the Egyptian city of Pithom, the lower layer of bricks, in some of the buildings, have very fine-cut straw in the bricks. As you get to some higher layers of bricks in the same building, the straw has stubble in it: corn husk, and just-stubble. When you get to the upper rows of brick, there’s nothing. No straw. But it (the straw) was used as an adhesive within the brick to strengthen the bricks; and in the upper bricks: there’s nothing at all, not even stubble. Which is an interesting confirmation of this passage of Scripture that we have before us tonight. It’s been proved, actually, by the archeologist’s spade.

And the taskmaster forced them the hurry, saying, Fulfill your work, your daily quota, as when you had straw. So the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and were asked, Why didn’t you fulfill your quota of brick today and yesterday? And the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, Why are you dealing thus with your servants? There is no straw given to your servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and, indeed, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.

And so, these union foremen came to the Pharaoh with a complaint. And they said, “Look, it’s not fair; you’re requiring us to make the same quota of brick, but you’re not giving us the straw. It’s not our fault that we can’t make enough bricks. It’s your fault. There’s no straw given to your servants, and they say to us, ‘Make brick.’”

But he said, You are idle, you are idle: therefore you say, Let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah. Therefore go now, and work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks. So, the Pharaoh’s heart was hard; I mean, he was just really hardened and stubborn in this very issue. He wouldn’t listen to their pleas. And the officers of the children of Israel saw that they were in trouble, after it was said, You shall not diminish any bricks from your daily quota. Then as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron, who stood there to meet them: And they said to them, Let the LORD look on you, and judge; because you have made us to stink in the sight

of the Pharaoh, Literally, “You’ve made our smell as stink in the sight of the Pharaoh.” and in the sight of his servant, to put a sword in their hand to kill us.

And so, these fellows are angry now with Moses and Aaron; and they’re saying, “Let the LORD judge you guys, you really have blown it.” You know, “you’re giving us a bad time.”

So Moses returned to the LORD, and he said, Lord, What are you doing? why have you brought trouble on this people? why did you send me? ‘I Didn’t want to come in the first place.’ For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to his people; and neither have you delivered your people at all.

“Lord, nothing’s happening. It’s only gotten worse. You haven’t kept your Word, You haven’t delivered the people; and it’s only been worse. Why did you send me? Why did you create this mess? Lord, why haven’t You worked?” And isn’t it interesting how so many times we seem to have the same feelings: “Lord, everything’s going wrong. Why, Lord, haven’t You done anything? Lord, why did you lead me into this mess? Why would You allow me, Lord, to get into this kind of a situation? Things are worse; You haven’t made anything better at all, it’s only worse, Lord.”

CHAPTER 6

Then the LORD said to Moses, Now you’re going to see what I’m going to do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand he will let you go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land. And God spoke to Moses, and said to him, I am Jehovah: I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as El Shaddai, the Almighty God, but by my name JEHOVAH I wasn’t known to them.

Now, they did call Him Jehovah, but they really didn’t understand the full significance of that name. They had come to know him as the Almighty God, but they really didn’t know Him as that personal God who would become to them all they needed. ‘They really didn’t know the full significance of My name: the Becoming One, the I AM, or the YAWYEH, or JEHOVAH, the God who becomes whatever it is that you might need.’

And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

‘The time has come when I’m going to fulfill it.’ Now, it isn’t that God forgot His covenant, but the time has now come for the fulfillment of that covenant.

Therefore, say to the children of Israel, I am JEHOVAH, I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage.

Now, the interesting thing is that they had become pretty accustomed to this slave labor routine. They were used to being pushed, and pressed, and beaten by the Egyptians. It was necessary, really, for them to have the Pharaoh inflict a harder burden on them to make them less reluctant in leaving. There were those, even when they did come out, who, in the wilderness, said, “Oh, remember the good old days in Egypt: when we had plenty of meat, and those onions and garlic? Oh man, oh, what I wouldn’t do for a hamburger now”, you know. And so there was a reluctance still in the hearts of some of them to leave the land. And so, the greater affliction from the Pharaoh is the thing that was really the goad, the impetus for the people to really say, “Let’s get out of here.” Otherwise, you would have had a difficult time getting them all to attempt this trek. And so, God had to bring the heavier bondage and affliction from the Pharaoh to really

cause them to realize, “We’ve got to get out of here.”

Tell the children of Israel, I am JEHOVAH, I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you as my people, and I will be your God: and then you will know that I am JEHOVAH your God, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

And so, God is establishing His word, now, and His covenant with His people.
“You’ll be my people, I will be your God.”

And I will bring you into the land, that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: for I am JEHOVAH. So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel: but they would not heed Moses because of the anguish of spirit, and cruel bondage.

Moses is now speaking to them again, but his fear is realized; they don’t listen to him now, they’ve been so oppressed by the Egyptians that they don’t want to hear Moses.

And so the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Go in, and speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he must let the children of Israel go out of this land. And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, The children of Israel have not heeded me now; and how will the Pharaoh heed me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?

So Moses is ready to resign and go back to Midian at this point. “Lord, even Your people won’t believe me, they’re not listening to me; how do You think the Pharaoh’s going to listen?”

And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel, and to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. God charged him: “Now, you do it.”

Now, at this point, we have a parenthesis of sorts. This verse 13, we’re going to pick it up again at the end of the chapter. But in the mean time, Moses gives a short genealogy of his family; first of all, going to the oldest son of Jacob, then to the second oldest, and then to Levi their father, the third in line. So, these are the heads of their father’s houses: first of all, the sons of Reuben, and his sons are named; and then the sons of Simeon, and his sons are named:

And these are the sons of Levi according to their generations; And so the various families from the tribe of Levi. And then in verse 20: Amram took for himself Jochebed his father’s sister as wife; so it was actually his aunt; and she bore him Aaron and Moses: Aaron was about three years older than Moses, and they did have an older sister, Miriam: older than both of them. And the years of Amram were a hundred and thirty seven. And then we come to Aaron’s family: And he took a daughter of Amminadab, and she bore for him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And we’ll get these fellows’ names further on in the history.

And then, the sons of Korah, who, you remember, rebelled against Moses. And then Eleazar, Aaron’s son, his wife bore Phinehas, who will come to one of the family heads in a later picture. So, he’s brought in.

This is the same Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies. And so these are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh the king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are the same Moses and

Aaron. So it gives you the family background. And it came to pass on the day when the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, That the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, I am JEHOVAH: speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you. And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall the Pharaoh heed me?

So we come back to the same excuse at the end of the chapter; and we then are led into chapter 7: as God begins now to show the Pharaoh just who he is, and reveals His power unto the Pharaoh: the beginning of the plagues which will ultimate in the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt.

So, next week we'll continue into chapters 7, 8, and 9: as we get into the plagues that God brings against the Egyptians in order that they might let His people go.

The Pharaoh's question; "Who is the LORD, that I should obey Him?" The eternal, living God. We should obey Him. He has established laws for our good. To violate those laws is only to bring harm upon ourselves. God would shield and protect us from so much if we would only listen. Our problem is that so often, as Pharaoh, we say, "Who is JEHOVAH, that I should obey Him?" And we go our own stubborn ways, and it leads us into all kinds of difficulty. Even as we will find with the Pharaoh, the difficulties that he experienced, he did not have to experience, but did experience because of his challenge of the Lord: "Who is He, that I should obey Him?" You can bring all kinds of disaster upon your own life by refusing to obey the LORD. The ultimate disaster is separation from Him.

May God speak to our hearts, and may we be obedient to Him. May we covenant with Him to obey His voice. How many times God said, "And if you will hearken unto Me, and obey My voice, then I will deliver you, and I will help you, and I will be with you, and I will bless you", and all; but it's conditioned upon our obedience to his voice. Oh, that God would speak to us tonight, and that we would enter into covenant with Him: "Lord, I will obey and be obedient unto You." God bless you, and watch over, and keep you in His love; anoint you with His Spirit, guide you according to His plan, in Jesus' name.