

18-19 Bible Study #8

10/30/18

Exodus 4

God Gives Moses Help for His Mission

Exodus 4

- **Exodus 4:1-13**

- *Moses* told God that the people will not believe him or that he was sent by God
- So God gave *Moses* two “signs” and said that the people will believe *Moses* because of these signs
- “**Signs**” will become a major theme in the **Gospel of John**
- The synoptic gospels present Jesus as performing several “mighty works” which we often call “miracles”
- John will ask whether the people will believe in Jesus because of his words or because of his works

Exodus 4 (Cont)

- They should believe in his words because, like *Moses*, Jesus is a covenantal mediator saving them by the hand of God
- But when they do not believe him, Jesus works “seven signs”
- That is why John’s Gospel is often referred to as, “the book of signs”

Exodus 4 (Cont)

- *Moses* told God that He had the wrong guy
- In fact, it appears that *Moses* might have had some sort of speech impediment (**Exodus 4:11**) *
- God asked *Moses* who makes man's mouth, and who causes one to speak or be dumb?
- God says to *Moses*, "I will be with your mouth"
- This is a repeat of the phrase, "I will be with" in **Exodus 3:12**
- Then *Moses*, after playing all of his cards and was out of excuses, pleaded with God to send someone else

Exodus 4 (Cont)

- **Exodus 4:14-17**

- At this point, God became angry and told *Moses* that his brother *Aaron* could act as a “prophet” for him
- God indicated that He would give his word to *Moses* and he could pass it to *Aaron* who would then give it to the people
- Remember that a prophet was not a fortune teller, but a mouthpiece for God
- He was the one through whom God spoke to the people
- We will see *Paul* speak of the fact that the Church has the gift of prophecy (speaking to the people for God)
- This is the same prophecy found in the Old Testament
- We can also see many examples of prophecies today 5

Exodus 4 (Cont)

- **Exodus 4:18-22**

- *Moses* sought permission from his father-in-law to return to *Egypt* since those who sought his life were dead
- What God instructed Moses to tell the Pharaoh sure sounded unfair
- This should not be seen as *Calvinistic* predestination ⁶
- If we read the story carefully, we will see that God hardened *Pharaoh's* heart, but only after *Pharaoh* hardened his own heart first
- God was not being unfair to *Pharaoh*
- He was only responding to Pharaoh's actions

Exodus 4 (Cont)

- **Exodus 4:23**

- Look at this early identification of what will happen
- God identified Israel as His firstborn son and demanded that he be let go
- He also warned *Pharaoh* that if he refused to let God's son go, his first born son would be killed (the great and final plague of **Exodus 12**)
- This should be seen as a “sign of the mercy of God”
- The rest of the plagues were not some sort of punishment, but acts of judgment upon Israel and the gods of Egypt in an attempt to bring about conversion
- This is an example of how God uses chastisement to bring about conversion

Exodus 4 (Cont)

- **Exodus 4:24**

- This is a strange little story that is not well understood
- The “fathers of the church” were all over the place trying to explain it
- The consensus is that:
 - His father-in-law was a Midianite who dwelt among the Ishmaelites
 - Ishmael was 13 years old when he was circumcised, so Moses was waiting until his son was older before circumcising him rather than on the 8th day as was required

Exodus 4 (Cont)

- **Exodus 4:25-31**

- Here we see how *Moses* and *Aaron* will interacted with each other as they presented God's message to the people of *Israel*
- This first time *Moses* and *Aaron* went to the people, they were believed at least for a little while

Exodus 5

Bricks without Straw

Exodus 5

- **Exodus 5:1-2**

- Look at what this first verse says: *“Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness”*
- He did not just say “Let my people go”
- That idea comes from “Liberation Theology” and it cannot be found anywhere in the bible (only in Hollywood movies)
- Father Sebastian said that *Pharaoh's* response could be understood two different ways, but either way he did not plan to let the people of Israel go:
 - “To know” could mean that he does not know as we would say in English, or
 - It could be closer to the Hebrew meaning that he did not “worship the God of the Hebrews” (I do not know him, I do not have a covenantal relationship with him, I don’t deal with him)

Exodus 5 (Cont)

- The final result was that *Pharaoh* did not worship the God of the *Hebrews*, and therefore he did not listen to him
- Again, *Pharaoh* was a polytheist and most likely worshiped at least 10 to 15 *Egyptian* gods, as well as ancestors, family, and maybe even a few foreign gods
- But why would he want to worship this *Hebrew* god?

Exodus 5 (Cont)

- **Exodus 5:3**

- Even after hearing this plea, *Pharaoh* would **not** let them go on a “three day” journey into the desert to worship their God
 - If they traveled for one day they would only be outside the city
 - Two days they could still be seen on the horizon
 - But three days would put them beyond the horizon
- *Pharaoh* must have wondered if they traveled that far would they ever come back
- *Moses* never promised that they would return

Exodus 5 (Cont)

- Think of what *Pharaoh* must have been thinking when over ½ million men (with their families) who were a major labor force wanted to leave the country
- Again, this was a religious rather than a political request

Exodus 5 (Cont)

- **Exodus 5:4-8**

- At this point, *Pharaoh* required them not only to maintain their quotas of bricks, but to collect their own straw
- Every time *Moses* spoke of sacrificing to their God, *Pharaoh* responded with more work
- Most people fail to realize that this is a religious battle to determine who the Hebrew people would worship (serve): Egypt and their gods or the God of Israel?

Exodus 5 (Cont)

- We must understand this in order to understand the entire *Exodus* story and how this image played out throughout the rest of Salvation History
- The “Fathers of the Church” believed and taught that when a person repented of his sins, he left Egypt
- Entering into the Baptismal font was symbolic of crossing the Red Sea
- You come out alive on the other side while *Pharaoh* and his dominions (sin) were washed away
- They believed this because *Pharaoh* and his army were seen as instruments of these pagan gods

Exodus 5 (Cont)

- *St Paul* will tell us that the pagan gods are demons (**1st Corinthians 10:20-22**)*
- The pagans worshiped demons and there were demonic personalities behind these pagan personalities
- Father said that if you have any doubt speak to an exorcist some of whom became very frightened when they asked the name of the demon and it turned out to be one of the ancient gods (especially if they were *Egyptian* gods)
- That would be a big demon who had been causing problems for a very long time

Exodus 5 (Cont)

- **Exodus 5:9-23**

- The situation goes from bad to worse and the people got really upset with *Moses* and *Aaron*
- In fact, the foreman of the people of Israel went behind *Moses* back to seek relief from the *Pharaoh*
- Next, after leaving *Pharaoh*, they chastised *Moses* and *Aaron* for making their plight worse
- *Moses* and *Aaron* then asked God why He had made things worse
- Father Sebastian said that these actions do not sound very pious, but then pointed out how God reacted to this in a way we would think he would react to this kind of language

Exodus 6

God Promised Deliverance

Exodus 6

- **Exodus 6:1-5**

- *Moses* had been praying to God for help using words that we might not expect to be part of a prayer
- Then God responded by telling him what He was about to do to the *Egyptians*
- We often see this kind of prayer in the Old Testament to include in the *Psalms*
- This language often sounds as though *Moses* was speaking to God as if He was his “dad”
- Fathers asked us to think of how our children sometimes talk to us
 - Sometimes it is very loving and respectful
 - Other times it is a little less respectful

Exodus 6 (Cont)

- The *Israelites* often talked to God as they would talk to a father
- He was their father because he was conventionally bound to them (the *Abrahamic* covenant)
- This language is very similar to what we saw in **Exodus 3:15** where God says that He is the God of *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob* who will bring them out of Egypt

Exodus 6 (Cont)

- **Exodus 6:6-13**

- God was about to conduct a “great act of judgment” against the gods of Egypt
- This phrase will be repeated at the end of the plagues in **Exodus 12:12** where God will again promise to execute judgment against the gods of Egypt
- Unfortunately, the people did not listen to *Moses*
- Beginning in **Exodus 4:31**, things seem to be going well because the people believed *Moses* and *Aaron*, but from here on everything *Moses* said was questioned

Exodus 6 (Cont)

- **Exodus 6:14-30**

- This section contains the family tree of *Israel* *
- Father suggested that we pay special attention to three families of Levi
 - Gershon
 - Merari
 - Kohath – Aaron and Moses
- Later, all of the priests will come only from the house of *Aaron*