

MOSES'S EXCUSES

Exodus 3:1-10 *"Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.' So when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.' Moreover He said, 'I am the God of your father — the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And Jehovah said: 'I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.'"*

God's communication with Moses through the burning bush is a thrilling passage of Scripture, the Almighty calling Moses to deliver Israel from Egyptian oppression! Unfortunately, it follows with some dreary protests from Moses. Observe.

I. "WHO AM I?"

- A. **Exodus 3:11-12** *"But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?' So He said, 'I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you:*

When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.’”

Despite his upbringing in the royal house (**Exodus 2:1-10; Acts 7:21**), Moses perceived himself disqualified. Notwithstanding his previous attempt to secure his people’s safety (**Exodus 2:11-12; Acts 7:23-25**), Moses somehow regarded himself as below the task.

- B. Romans 8:31** *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”*

Deuteronomy 31:6 *“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for Jehovah your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”*

Of course, it matters little who we are if God is with us.

- C. Matthew 28:19-20** *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

Jesus, when He commissioned His apostles to proclaim the gospel worldwide, assured them of His continual presence.

- D. 2nd Corinthians 3:5-6** *“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”*

Our sufficiency to the task has more to do with God than ourselves.

II. “WHAT SHALL I SAY?”

- A. Exodus 3:13-15** *“Then Moses said to God, ‘Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you,” and they say to me, “What is His name?” what shall I say to them?’ And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the*

children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you." Moreover God said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: "Jehovah 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 to all generations."'"

It is not unwise to anticipate challenges which may arise during the performance of our duties, but the order is wrong here. Instead of accepting his duty, then inquiring about potential conflicts, Moses used potential conflicts to deflect his responsibility.

- B.** **Colossians 4:6** *"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."*

2nd Timothy 2:15 *"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

1st Peter 3:15 *"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."*

We are responsible to study in preparation for answering critics.

- C.** **1st Peter 4:11** *"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God."*
1st Corinthians 2:2 *"For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."*

What needs to be said is simply what God has said, the plain gospel.

III. "SUPPOSE THEY WILL NOT BELIEVE ME"

- A.** **Exodus 4:1-9** *"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."'" So Jehovah said to him, 'What is that in your hand?' He said, 'A rod.' And He said, 'Cast it on the ground.' So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. Then Jehovah 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), 'that they may believe that Jehovah God of*

their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.’ Furthermore Jehovah said to him, ‘Now put your hand in your bosom.’ And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow. 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. And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.’”

Moses predicted his audience’s skepticism, but God demonstrated miraculous proofs that could be used to convince them.

- B.** **Romans 10:17** *“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*
John 20:30-31 *“Truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”*

Faith is established by hearing or reading God’s Word. Those who believe do so because inspiration has persuaded them.

- C.** **John 12:37-41** *“But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: ‘Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?’ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: ‘He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’ These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.”*

Those who disbelieve do so no matter how convincing the evidence. Jesus himself was doubted even after performing so many signs and wonders!

IV. “I AM NOT ELOQUENT”

- A. **Exodus 4:10-12** *“Then Moses said to Jehovah, ‘O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.’ So Jehovah said to him, ‘Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, Jehovah? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”*

Moses claimed he wasn’t articulate enough to communicate on God’s behalf.

- B. **Acts 7:22** *“Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.”*

That was simply untrue, for Stephen, by inspiration, declared Moses “mighty in words” from before his call at the burning bush. Either Moses meekly understated his ability or he aggressively avoided his duty.

- C. **1st Corinthians 2:1-5** *“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”*

The power lies in the message, not the messenger.

- D. **Romans 16:18** *“For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”*

If we should beware of any particular quality of speech, it should be the polished delivery that conceals error, not the plain presentation of truth.

V. **“PLEASE SEND... WHOMEVER ELSE YOU MAY SEND”**

- A. **Exodus 4:13-17** *“But he said, ‘O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send.’ So the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses, and He said: ‘Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall 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.’”*

Running out of excuses, Moses desperately begged the Lord to just send “whomever”.

- B. **1st Peter 2:9-10** *“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”*

But there is nobody else. We are the “special people” designated by God to proclaim His praises. If we don’t, who will?

- C. **Mark 16:15-16** *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”*

The gospel needs to be shared!