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LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE SERIES)

STUDIES IN EXODUS & LEVITICUS

(Exodus 3 & 4, Lord's Day, September 3, 2017)

OVERVIEW

"Sessions 1" *We and Moses Get Our Marching Orders*

As we embark on our study of the gospel in the Hebrew Scriptures, we will see much about the Lord God's greatness, and our weakness. Yahweh tells us He hears our cries from the slavery of our taskmaster. He decides to bring us out of our slavery. Yet, even when told by the Lord God Himself that "I will be with you," we look for excuses, often impudently believing them to be reasons.

AUDACIOUS EXCUSES FROM YAHWEH'S PEOPLE

MOSES—

US—

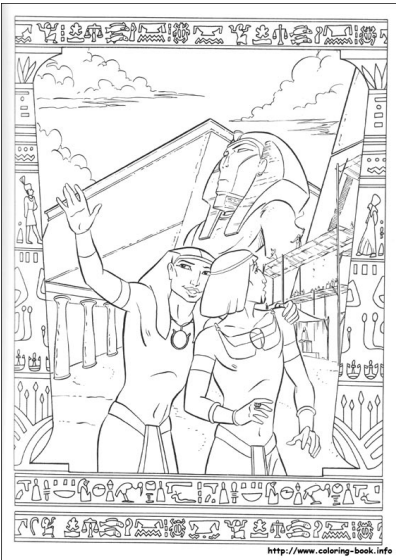
Who am I to tell others about You?	I'm just a _____; I can't tell others. Do all things as unto the Lord—so He will be glorified.
I don't even know Your name?	Oh, you know who I'm talking about: "God..." (no reference to His name, title, or powers, just His "status." Kind of like us being called "person.")
What if people don't believe me?	I'll be embarrassed if people think I'm nuts, especially about "God..." Remember the first transgression was the man worrying more about what the woman wanted than what Yahweh wanted.
I'm neither eloquent; my tongue is slow!	Evangelism is not one of my gifts. Balderdash! We evangelize about everything else important to us.
Can't someone else do it?	I'll hire a preacher, or education pastor, to be my hired gun. No need to get my hands dirty—I've got to _____. Get over it; you've got a mission from the Creator of the universe who has declared "I am with you."

So, be careful with your excuses—they tell too much about who you really are, and speak poorly for who you really want to be. Make sure your understanding of the Lord God Jehovah comes from Him in the Scriptures, not from Moses-like excuses and cultural toxicity. Watch out for Cecil B. DeMille.

A CECIL B. DEMILLE EXAMINATION OF EXODUS

1. The Israelites weren't really slaves in Egypt, but simply dependent upon Pharaoh for sustenance. T ? F
2. It is acceptable to lie, if it's for a good cause. T ? F
3. Pharaoh had all Hebrew children thrown into the Nile because we were growing into overwhelming numbers. T ? F
4. Moses is one of the favorite names in Hebrew for believers in the Lord God. T ? F
5. Moses' mother [Jochebed] was brought into Pharaoh's house to raise him. T ? F
6. Moses' mother [Jochebed] was also his aunt. T ? F
7. Moses committed murder, and this led him to leave Egypt. T ? F
8. Moses was a prince of Egypt with fairly high political power and influence. T ? F
9. After Moses spent 40 years in Egypt, he left to meet a priest of the Lord God in Midian. T ? F
10. Exodus is the Hebrew word for "going out." T ? F
11. We should take off our shoes when worshipping—Moses & Joshua did. T ? F
12. Moses was a great builder in Egypt before leaving for Midian. T ? F

Notes from discussion—



A CECIL B. DEMILLE EXAMINATION OF EXODUS

1. The Israelites weren't really slaves in Egypt, but simply dependent upon Pharaoh for sustenance. F 1:11
2. It is acceptable to lie, if it's for a good cause. [It depends on "the cause."] ? 1:15-22
3. Pharaoh had all Hebrew children thrown into the Nile because we were growing into overwhelming numbers. F 1:12 & 1:22
4. Moses is one of the favorite names in Hebrew for believers in the Lord God. [aka Moshe] ? Egyptian?¹
5. Moses' mother [Jochebed] was brought into Pharaoh's house to raise him. F 2:8-10
6. Moses' mother [Jochebed] was also his aunt. [Jochebed married Amram, who was Amram's father's sister.] F 6:8
7. Moses committed murder, and this led him to leave Egypt. T 2:11-15
8. Moses was a prince of Egypt with fairly high political power and influence. F 2:15
9. After Moses spent 40 years in Egypt, he left to meet a priest of the Lord God in Midian. [Jethro] T 3:1; 18:11
10. Exodus is the Hebrew word for "going out." [exodus, ἐξοδος; Hebrew name is מֹשֶׁה, Shēmōṭī, "Names"] F Greek LXX
11. We should take off our shoes when worshipping—Moses & Joshua did. [see Joshua 5:13-15] T 3:5
12. Moses was a great builder in Egypt before leaving for Midian. F Nada.

Notes from discussion—

Prince of Egypt



¹See <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/related-articles/was-moses-name-egyptian>; both Hebrew and Egyptian words have vocal similarities and apparent etymological roots. The similarities may be coincidental, however, rather than linguistic.

TEXTUAL ISSUES EXODUS 3 & 4 (NAMES)

Exodus 3:1-14. *Moses encounters the Deity of his ancestors, Yahweh.* After Moses drove off some recalcitrant shepherds and rescued the daughters of Jethro, he was given the daughter Zipporah in marriage. Once when he was tending the flock of Jethro, he actually led them to Horeb—the mountain of God Himself.

There the angel of Yahweh appeared, in the flames of a burning bush no less. Yet, Moses observed, the bush did not burn up. I'm going to take a look—this is curiouiser and curiouiser.

When Yahweh saw Moses had come over, He called out, from within the bush—*Moses! Moses!* "Here I am," he said.

Don't come any closer, God said, take off your sandals—the place where you're standing is holy ground. I am the God of your father [Amram], I am the God of Abraham, I am the God of Isaac, and I am the God of Jacob.

Moses freaked—hiding his face, he was afraid to look at God.

Yahweh then said—

I have seen the misery of My people in Egypt. Their slave drivers have caused their crying, and I am concern about their suffering. [see Exodus 2:23-24] So... I have come down to rescue them, to bring them out of Egypt and into a land flowing with milk, honey, and profitable 401K's. This land is currently the home of believers who left Me—Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. [see Genesis 14:18]

I've heard the cry of the Israelites; I have seen how Egypt is oppressing them. As for you? Go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring My people out of Egypt.

Moses asked, who am I to show up in Pharaoh's court and bring all his workers, the Israelites, out of Egypt? God was clear: *I will be with you. And just so you know, just saying, here's the proof that I have sent you—when you bring the people out, you will all worship God, right here on this mountain.*

EXODUS 3:1-14

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ²There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

⁴When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."

⁵"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." ⁶Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

¹¹But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

¹²And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you all will worship God on this mountain."

¹³Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

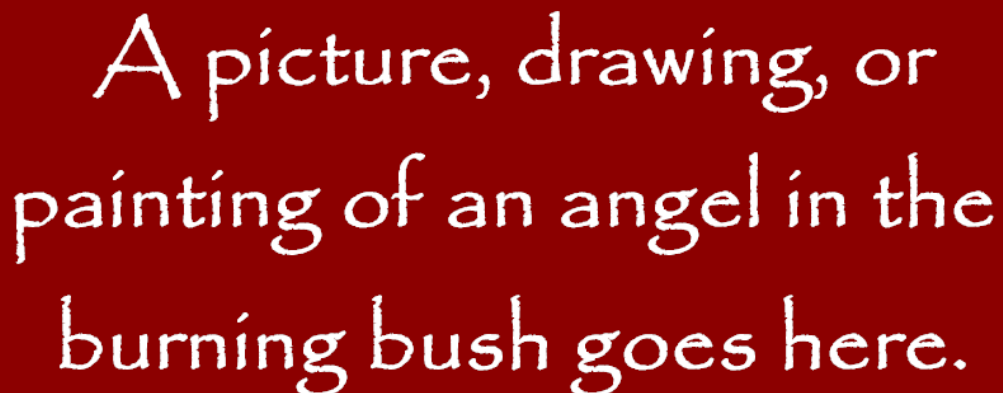
¹⁴God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. [or I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE] This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Right. So, suppose I do indeed go the Israelites, telling them that the God of their ancestors has sent me. and they ask, “Excuse me, who sent you— what is His name?” What’s my answer to these folk? It’s been forty years since I’ve been back home.

You tell them, God said, I AM WHO I AM; I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE. This is what you are to say to My people, the Israelites in Egypt—

I AM has sent me to you.

- Q What is the significance of finding a priest of God in Midian?
- Q Why did the angel appear and Yahweh speak?
- Q Why do you suppose Yahweh (Christ?) did not comfort Moses as he hid his face?
- Q What got the attention of the Lord God Yahweh regarding believers in Egypt?
- Q Why was the land of the all the “-ites” given as land for believers? [See Genesis 14:18]
- Q What was Moses’ objection to going to Pharaoh? What did he mean, “Who am I?”
- Q What was God’s answer to Moses? Can you sing it? Shout it? Make it part of your *raison d’être*?
- Q What was the proof that Moses was indeed sent by Yahweh, the God of their ancestors?
- Q Why did Moses ask for the name of the God of our ancestors? What didn’t Moses know at this point about God Almighty, the Creator of the universe? What did Moses call God before he learned of Elohim’s name, Yahweh?



A picture, drawing, or painting of an angel in the burning bush goes here.

A search came up virtually empty—almost all illustrations portrayed a purported image of Father God, the Christ, or nothing in the burning bush. *Sola Scriptura!*

Exodus 3:15-22. *Marching orders—you're not alone.* After God's name was clarified, Yahweh continued:

Tell the Israelites that Yahweh the God of your fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—has sent Me to you. The is My name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered, from generation to generation to generation.

So, go. Get the leaders of Israel together, and tell them that Yahweh, the God of your fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—appeared to me and said: "I have been watching over you, and I have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. Not only that, but I will bring you out of your misery in Egypt and give you the land of the"—ites," a land flowing with milk and honey.

The elders/leaders will listen to you. Then you and the elders will go to the king and say: Yahweh—the God of the Hebrews—has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the Lord God Yahweh, our God.

Now I know that Pharaoh will not let you go unless My mighty hand makes him. So? I will demonstrate My strength by showing wonders upon wonders among the people of Egypt. After that? He will let you go.

Furthermore, I will make the Egyptians happy about you—so that when you leave, you'll not be empty-handed. Every woman will ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for silver and gold, and clothing—you'll put on your sons and daughters. You will plunder the Egyptians as if there had been a war, and you won.

- Q So, what was Moses' first trip to Pharaoh about? What was he asking the king to let him do?
- Q Without reading further, what do you suppose the king's answer was? Why? Would you if Pharaoh?
- Q What was the need for the gathering/plunder of gold, silver, and clothing?

EXODUS 3:15-22

God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'Yahweh, the 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, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

16"Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-- appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. 17And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites--a land flowing with milk and honey.'

18"The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.'

19But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. 20So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

21"And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. 22Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians."

Exodus 4:1-12. *More excuses to avoid Egypt.*
Moses continued with "what if..."

What if they don't believe me? *What's in your hand? A staff. Throw it on the ground.* It became a snake; Moses was ophiophobic, and moved away, quickly.

The Lord God Yahweh was not impressed: *Reach out, take it by the tail, son.* Moses overcame his ophidiophobia, and sure enough when he picked it up, the snake became a staff again. *This is what will help people believe that the Lord God Yahweh—the God of your fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—has indeed appeared to you.*

Apparently, Moses was not totally convinced, for the Lord God had him put his hand inside his coat—when he took it out, it was covered with a leprous like coating. *Put your hand back inside, and when Moses did—sure enough, his hand was restored.*

Yahweh continued:

If they don't believe you, or pay attention to the first miracle, they may believe the second. But if they don't believe either, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the ground—it'll become blood on the ground.

Moses thought some more, trying to generate another excuse—Oh, I'm not eloquent—I'm slow of speech and tongue.

The Lord God Yahweh Almighty shook His head—

Who gave people a mouth? Who makes a person deaf? Who makes a person mute? Who gives sight? Who makes a person blind? Is it not I, Yahweh?

Now move along—I will help you speak, and teach you what to say.

Q What have you learned about the character of the Lord God from His interaction with Moses?

Q Why blood from water? Why three signs?

EXODUS 4:1-12

Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you?'"

²Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?"

"A staff," he replied.

³The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground."

Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. ⁴Then the LORD said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. ⁵"This," said the LORD, "is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has appeared to you."

⁶Then the LORD said, "Put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was leprous, like snow.

⁷"Now put it back into your cloak," he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.

⁸Then the LORD said, "If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second. ⁹But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground."

¹⁰Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

¹¹The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"

¹²Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

Exodus 4:13-31. Moses kvetches, Yahweh loses His temper. BUT, Moses continued, Sire please send someone else to do this.

Yahweh was not happy; burning with anger, Yahweh said—

Okay, what about Aaron? I know he can speak well; in fact, he is already on his way to meet you. He'll be glad to see you, right down to the core of who he is. You will tell him what to speak; you will put the very words in his mouth. I will teach you what to do; he will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth, as if you were God to him. BUT, don't forget the staff so you can perform miraculous signs with it.

Moses reported back to Jethro, and told him what he had to do. Jethro gave him his blessing, wishing him well.

Yahweh reassured Moses by telling him that the folks who wanted him dead for his murdering the Egyptian were now dead. So Moses took his wife Zipporah, his two sons Gershom & Eliezar, and headed to Egypt, with the staff of God in his hand.

To reassure Moses further, the Lord God Yahweh said,

When you return, make sure you perform these miraculous signs in front of Pharaoh. He needs to know you mean business, for I have given you the power to do these things. BUT, I will make Pharaoh stubborn, so much that he will not want to let the people go. Here's what you tell him then: Yahweh says Israel is my firstborn son and I have told you to let My son go so he may worship Me. BUT, you refused to let him go—so? I will kill your firstborn son.

At a motel 6 on the way, Yahweh met with Moses again and was about to kill his son. But his wise wife knew what the trouble

EXODUS 4:13-31

But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it." ¹⁴Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. ¹⁵You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. ¹⁶He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. ¹⁷But take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it."

¹⁸Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me go back to my own people in Egypt to see if any of them are still alive." Jethro said, "Go, and I wish you well."

¹⁹Now the LORD had said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead." ²⁰So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand.

²¹The LORD said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go."

²²Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son, ²³and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me." But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.'

²⁴At a lodging place on the way, the LORD met Moses [or *Moses' son*] and was about to kill him. ²⁵But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it [or *drew near Moses' feet*]. "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me," she said. ²⁶So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she said "bridegroom of blood," referring to circumcision.)

²⁷The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses." So he met Moses at the mountain of God and kissed him. ²⁸Then Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and also about all the miraculous signs he had commanded him to perform. ²⁹Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, ³⁰and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, ³¹and they believed. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.

was—Zipporah stepped in, took a flint knife and cut off the foreskin of the son’s penis. Coming near to Moses with the foreskin, she said, surely you are the “bridegroom of blood” to me. At that point, Yahweh let him alone.

About the same time, Yahweh told Aaron to go meet Moses in the desert. Sure enough they met at the mountain of God [Horeb]; kissing Moses, Aaron was told about everything that Yahweh had sent him to say, and all about the miraculous signs he could use to support his credibility. So the two of them brought together all the elders/leaders of Israel, and Aaron told them about the good news, about everything the Lord God Yahweh had told Moses. The signs were performed and they believed. Most importantly, when they realized Yahweh Himself was concerned about them, had seen their misery, and heard their cries—they bowed down and worshipped—the God of their fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—Yahweh.

- Q Why was the Lord God irritated with Moses? When the Lord God burns with anger, who should look out?
- Q Was Aaron a solution made of band aids, or stainless steel pins?
- Q Why did the Lord God warn Moses & Aaron about how Pharaoh’s “heart would be hardened?”
- Q How was Israel the Lord God’s “first born son?”
- Q What was purified by Zipporah’s action with the son?²
- Q What caused the elders to worship the Lord God? What was the “good news?”

²See an interesting treatment of the issues at http://jbcnew.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/354/354_circum.pdf Among other things, was Zipporah a gentile? Why didn’t Moses perform the circumcision? Why not both boys? Was the Lord God going to kill Moses or just the son (the text is not clear)? Why the import here when circumcision was suspended for forty years as we wandered in the wilderness?

3:1 *Horeb*. Means "desert," "desolation"; either (1) an alternate name for Mount Sinai or (2) another high mountain in the same vicinity in the southeast region of the Sinai peninsula. Tradition identifies Mount Horeb with Ras es-Safsaf ("willow peak"), 6,500 feet high, and Mount Sinai with Jebel Musa ("mountain of Moses"), 7,400 feet high, but both identifications are uncertain.

3:2 *angel of the LORD*. Used interchangeably with "the LORD" and "God" in v. 4 (see Genesis 16:7). *appeared to him in flames of fire*. God's revelation of himself and his will was often accompanied by fire (see 13:21; 19:18; 1Ki 18:24,38).

3:5 *Take off your sandals*. A practice followed by Jennifer Singleton when she worships. *holy*. The ground was not holy by nature but was made so by His divine presence (see, e.g., Ge 2:3).

3:6 See 2:24 and note. *afraid to look at God*. See notes on Ge 16:13; 32:30. Later, as the Lord's servant, Moses would meet with God on Mount Sinai (19:3) and even ask to see God's glory (33:18).

3:8 *I have come down to rescue*. God may also come down to judge (see Ge 11:5-9; 18:21). *land flowing with milk and honey*. The traditional and proverbial description of the hill country of Canaan--in its original pastoral state (see note on Isa 7:15).

3:12 *I will be with you*. The Hebrew word translated "I will be" is the same as the one translated "I AM" in v. 14.

3:13 Moses' second expression of reluctance. *What is his name?* God had not yet identified himself to Moses by name (see v. 6; cf. Genesis 17:1). And the Lord God is not referred to by name in Genesis until the second chapter (2:4). Before that They are referred to as Elohim.

3:14 *I AM WHO I AM*. The name by which God wished to be known and worshiped in Israel--the name that expressed his character as the dependable and faithful God who desires the full trust of his people (see v. 12, where "I will be" is completed by "with you"; see also 34:5-7). *I AM*. The shortened form of the name is perhaps found also in Ps 50:21. Jesus applied the phrase to himself; in so doing he claimed to be Deity/Elohim and risked being stoned for blasphemy (see John 8:58-59).

3:15 *The LORD*. The Hebrew for this name is *Yahweh* (often incorrectly spelled "Jehovah;" see note on Dt 28:58). It means "He is" or "He will be" and is the third-person form of the verb translated "I will be" in v. 12 and "I AM" in v. 14. When God speaks of himself he says, "I AM," and when we speak of him we say, "He is."

3:16 *elders*. The Hebrew for this word means lit. "bearded ones," perhaps reflecting the age, wisdom, experience and influence necessary for a man expected to function as an elder. As heads of local families and tribes, "elders" had a recognized position also among the Babylonians, Hittites, Egyptians (see Ge 50:7), Moabites and Midianites (see Numbers 22:7). Their duties included judicial arbitration and sentencing (see Dt 22:13-19) as well as military leadership (see Jos 8:10) and counsel (see 1Sa 4:3).

3:18 *three-day journey*. Probably a conventional expression for a short trip rather than a journey of exactly three days. *desert*. God had met with Moses there (see vv. 1-2) and would meet with him there again (see v. 12).



³Adapted, corrected, and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.

3:21-22 See 11:2-3; 12:35-36. **3:21** *when you leave you will not go empty-handed*. God had promised Abraham that after Israel had served for 400 years they would "come out with great possessions" (Ge 15:14; see Ps 105:37). Israel herself was to live by the same principle of providing gifts to a released slave (see Dt 15:12-15).

4:3 *snake*. Throughout much of Egypt's history the pharaoh wore a cobra made of metal on the front of his headdress as a symbol of his sovereignty.

4:8 *miraculous sign*. A supernatural event or phenomenon designed to demonstrate authority, provide assurance (see Jos 2:12-13), bear testimony (see Isa 19:19-20), give warning (see Nu 17:10) or encourage faith.

4:10 Moses' fourth expression of reluctance. *I am slow of speech and tongue*. Not necessarily in the sense of a speech impediment (see Acts 7:22). He complained, instead, of not being eloquent or quick-witted enough to respond to the pharaoh (see 6:12). Cf. the description of Paul in 2Co 10:10.

4:14 *the LORD's anger burned against Moses*. Although the Lord is "slow to anger" (34:6), he does not withhold his anger or punishment from his disobedient children forever (see 34:7). *Levite*. Under Aaron's leadership Israel's priesthood would come from the tribe of Levi; Moses was also from the tribe of Levi.

4:21 *I will harden his heart*. Nine times in Exodus the hardening of the pharaoh's heart is ascribed to God (here; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:4,8; see also Romans 9:17-18); another nine times the pharaoh is said to have hardened his own heart (7:13-14,22; 8:15,19,32; 9:7,34-35). The pharaoh alone was the agent of the hardening in each of the first five plagues. Not until the sixth plague did God confirm the pharaoh's willful action (see 9:12), as he had told Moses he would do (see similarly Romans 1:24-28).

4:22 *firstborn son*. A figure of speech indicating Israel's special relationship with God (see Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1). *son*. Used collectively of the Israelites also in Hosea 11:1.

4:24 *lodging place*. A "motel 6," perhaps near water, where travelers could spend the night. *The LORD. . . was about to kill him*. Evidently because Moses had failed to circumcise his son (see Genesis 17:9-14).

4:25 *Zipporah . . . cut off her son's foreskin*. Sensing that divine displeasure had threatened Moses' life, she quickly performed the circumcision on their young son. *flint knife*. Continued to be used for circumcision long after metal was introduced, probably because flint knives were sharper than the metal instruments available and thus more efficient for the surgical procedure (see Jos 5:2 and note). *feet*. Probably a euphemism for "genitals," as in Dt 28:57 ("womb," lit. "feet").

4:26 *bridegroom of blood*. Circumcision was practiced for various reasons among many peoples of the ancient Near East.