

The Book of Exodus

The Return to Egypt

Text: Exodus 4:18-31

Introduction:

1. When the time was right, God called Moses to lead the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt.
2. Though Moses was hesitant initially, he finally submitted to God's command.
3. Now, Moses makes preparations to leave Midian and to return to Egypt.

I. The Farewell

(Exodus 4:18-20)

- A. After living for 40 years among the Midianites and the family of Jethro, Moses sought his father-in-law's consent for his departure.
 1. This meant that Jethro's daughter and grandchildren would be leaving.
 2. Moses showed kindness, courtesy, and compassion for Jethro.
- B. Jethro responded with kindness, "Go in peace."
- C. As further encouragement, God made Moses aware of the fact that those who had wanted to kill him were now dead.
 1. It is possible that Moses was still hesitating to return.
 2. This verse mirrors God's message to Joseph in Matthew 2:20.
- D. Finally, Moses gathered his family and began the journey to Egypt.
 1. His wife and two sons would accompany him on this trip.
 2. Though their outward appearance was not impressive, with God on their side, they were a mighty force travelling through the wilderness.
- E. Notice that Moses' rod has become the "rod of God" – for God would use it to work many wonders.

II. The Reminder

(Exodus 4:21-23)

- A. God reminded Moses what was to be said to Pharaoh.
- B. God reminded Moses that Pharaoh would not listen or submit.
- C. God reminded Moses that miracles and wonders would be performed.
- D. God reminded Moses that judgment and punishment would follow disobedience.
- E. A note on the hardening of Pharaoh's heart
 1. God declared that He would harden Pharaoh's heart.
 2. Yet, this would be accomplished by the working of wonders that would prove the authority of Jehovah.
 3. When Pharaoh saw those miracles, he rejected the truth that they confirmed.
 4. Thus, Pharaoh hardened his own heart (7:22; 8:15, 32; 9:34; etc.).
 5. God's Word has the power to soften or harden hearts, depending upon the response of man.

III. The Preparation

(Exodus 4:24-26)

- A. As Moses' family stopped to rest, the Lord met Moses and sought to kill him.
 1. This phrase was sometimes used to indicate that someone had been struck by a serious illness – either of mind or body.
 2. If this is the case, it was sent by God as punishment for Moses.

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- B. The reason for God's anger was the failure of Moses to circumcise his son.
 - 1. The Bible does not state why Moses had not kept this commandment.
 - a. Perhaps it was because he was in a foreign land, separated from the people of God.
 - b. Maybe it was because of the influence of his wife, who does not seem to approve of the action.
 - 2. Still, the penalty for such disobedience was death (Genesis 17:9-14).
- C. To deliver Moses' life, his wife, Zipporah, performed the circumcision of their son with stone – likely, flint.
- D. Twice, she called Moses a bloody husband because of this action.
 - 1. Clearly, there was some disagreement between Moses and his wife concerning the commands of God.
 - 2. Sometime during this trip, Moses sent his wife and sons back to Jethro in Midian (Exodus 18:1-6).
 - 3. It is likely that this event led to such a separation.
- E. Yet, when the command was obeyed, God let Moses go – freed him from the punishment and allowed him to continue on his journey.

- IV. The Reunion (Exodus 4:27-28)
 - A. As God had promised, Moses would be reunited with his brother Aaron, who would become his spokesman.
 - B. God spoke to Aaron and told him to meet Moses in the wilderness.
 - C. They met at Mount Sinai – the mount of God – and warmly greeted one another.
 - D. Moses related to Aaron all that God had told him, and together they returned to Egypt.

- V. The Arrival (Exodus 4:29-31)
 - A. Upon arriving in Egypt, Moses and Aaron gathered the elders of Israel.
 - B. Aaron told them all the words that God had revealed to Moses.
 - C. Moses performed the signs and wonders that God had commanded.
 - D. As a result, the people believed!
 - E. They bowed their heads in reverence and worshipped Jehovah who had heard their cries and promised their deliverance.