

# **Here am I Lord – Send someone else!**

## **Introduction**

Moses plan to deliver God's people had led him to shepherd a flock of sheep in a hot dusty desert for 40 years.

At the age of 80, on an ordinary working day, with no warning at all God calls to him out of a burning bush.

Moses response after this long wait was to make excuses. God couldn't use him now he was inferior, incompetent.

## **Revision**

As Moses turned aside to behold the amazing sight of the bush burning and yet not being consumed, the voice of God addressed him.

First, God reminded Moses of His holiness (v. 5).

Next, He revealed Himself in covenant-relationship (v. 6).

Then, He expressed His compassion (v. 7).

Then He declared His purpose: "I am come down to rescue them out of the hand of the Egyptians", etc. (v. 8).

Finally, He addressed Himself to Moses: "So now, go I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." (v.10)

## **God's call**

God's plan was simple. Moses was to return to Egypt as the Lord's anointed servant and act as his instrument of deliverance.

God did not ask for Moses advice on the matter.

God did not ask for Moses permission.

God did not ask how he felt about the matter, after all who would want to return to the place of a previous humiliating failure.

Just go and do as you are told Moses.

God did not want Moses to deliver his people, just to be used as his instrument.

Exodus 3:10-12

**Excuse 1**

Who am I?

“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt.” (11)

Moses begins a dialogue with God. Although shaking with fear before this Holy Being, he argues that he won't go because

#1 he fears Pharaoh,

#2 he fears the Egyptians and

#3 he fears the rejection of his people.

Yet he doesn't seem to fear God.

When God first called him to go back Moses said, "who am I?' I have been rejected by the Jews, rejected by the Egyptians and I have a price on my head. Sure, 40 years ago when you first called me I was a general in Egypt, the son of Pharaoh's daughter, had all this administrative experience and was a man of power in word and deed, but now I am 80 years old. For the last 40 years I have been out in the desert just herding a bunch of sheep around. "Who am I - I - that - I - should go to Pharaoh, and that - I - should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" But God has just told him God is going to do the job.

**Response 1**

God's reply. "I will be with you."

And "You'll be back" (to this place for worship)

When we are called to service, large or small we have the same promise "I am with you always", and the indwelling presence of God the Holy Spirit.

In short God said, "I will take care of everything."

Exodus 3:13-22

## **Excuse 2**

Who shall I say sent me?

After 40 years I'm suppose to walk in there with another god? My generation is either eighty years older or dead, and I am to walk back there and say, "The God of your fathers has sent me?" Most of the Jews were living in idolatry in Egypt, naturally if someone came to those Jews and said, "God sent me," they'd more than likely say, "Which one?"

## **Response 2**

**God's reply I am has sent me to you**

"I am" is the great name of God. We too are to go forth declaring the name and nature of God as He has been revealed. Our business is to *proclaim* God as He has revealed Himself in and through Jesus Christ. The "I am" of the burning bush now stands fully declared in the blessed Person of our Saviour who said, "*I am* the bread of life", "*I am* the good Shepherd", "*I am* the door." "*I am* the light of the world", "*I am* the way, the truth and the life", "*I am* the resurrection and the life", "*I am* the true vine. He is the eternal "I am"—"the Same, yesterday, and today, and forever."

'I am the eternally existing God who is always present, who is continually and increasingly revealing Myself.' I am a God who will always be there. I am a God who wants to be known by you as being there, and if you walk with Me, you will increasingly come to know Me. You go back and tell them, 'I AM' sent you."

You tell them also, 'I am the God of the covenant with their fathers. Note the *threefold* repetition of *God*—"The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Is there not here something more than a hint of the Holy Trinity! You go tell them that.

Then you are to go to Pharaoh and begin with a typical Middle Eastern bargaining offer. God says, "Just ask for three days to go out and worship your God." Moses is not lying or being deceitful.

This is a typical way of bargaining in the eastern culture. You are expected to bargain in the Middle East.

Both Pharaoh and Moses know the Hebrews want to leave forever, but this is the way of bargaining in the Middle East. Face meant everything. So Moses gives Pharaoh the easiest way to agree with him without losing face, and only asks for three days.

Pharaoh knows what he means. Pharaoh is an ancient easterner too. Pharaoh knows exactly what he means and so does Moses. We have to put ourselves back 3500 years into another culture. This is how they bargained. Neither one of them is speaking in openness. That is the way they lived in those days. Pharaoh knew exactly what Moses wanted and so did Moses.

The issue ultimately was not between Moses and Pharaoh but between Yahweh and the gods of Egypt. It is not a fight between Moses and Pharaoh or Moses and the Egyptians or Moses and the Israelites.

And Moses was told the end from the beginning. It was to give him a realistic picture of what was to happen, and hope in the end result. How often we are glad we don't know the end in the beginning. How often we find we can face and cope with more than we thought we could, because we have to, and do so in His strength, which we surprisingly find sufficient.

Exodus 4:1-9

### **Excuse 3**                      What if .....

God had spoken at least twice to Moses, once when he heard he was the deliver of Israel, maybe when he was young, maybe when he was 40. And again now 40 years later. But the Jews in Egypt had not heard from God in hundreds of years. Moses isn't that big a deal to them. When he was in Egypt, he was on the Egyptian side as far as they were concerned. He was a son of Pharaoh's daughter. He was floating down the Nile in a barge while slaves

pulled the oars, and they were the slaves. Why should they accept him? Why should God reveal Himself to a traitorous Jew when He hadn't revealed Himself to them?

The Lord had emphatically declared, they “will listen to you” (3:18), and yet Moses replies, They *will not listen or believe*. (4:1) The excuse of a worrier “What if ....”

Would the anticipation of rejection provide the necessary escape route? Would God say Oh yes you're right, I hadn't thought of that! We are all like it to some extent, BUT Moses question is AFTER God had spoken on the matter (3:18a)

### **Response 3**            God's reply – a demonstration of power

God says, "O.K. we'll deal with that problem." You will have my power. God is patient and in His love answers this stubborn, rebellious man, loaded down with all the guilt of failure, incompetence and inferiority. God says You will have My power. (4:2-5) The purpose is “so they may believe” – that Moses is the man God is using.

Three miraculous signs to convince the Hebrew leaders, and even Moses, that God would use His power to back up his words.

**The first of these signs** was the turning of the rod, a dead hunk of wood, probably a gnarled old acacia shaft not a beautiful shepherd's crook like Little Bo Peep into a serpent, and that back again into a rod (Study from Pink on meaning of signs) A deadly poisonous viper – Moses recognised it and ran.

What happens if there is a cobra slithering along and you reach out and grab it by its tail? Cobras don't care to be grabbed by their tails. He is going to whip around and sink his fangs in you, and you are a dead man.

God wants Moses vulnerable. He is totally helpless in dealing with a snake with his bare hands. He is not allowed to take his staff and beat it over the head. He is not even allowed to sneak up and get it by its neck. God is trying to make Moses realise that in his

vulnerability there lies God's strength. He has got to understand that he cannot be standing on his own resources at all and that God can use anything, even an 80-year-old shepherd  
Whatever you have is all I need. Whatever you are is all I need. All I need is you. I will take care of the rest. To be a godly woman or a godly man all we need to be is God's.

The significance of **this second sign** is not difficult to discern. Moses has had all the rejection he can handle from his own people and the Egyptians. The last thing Moses needed in going back to Egypt to reach the Jews was a good case of leprosy.

"Leprosy" is a well-known emblem of sin—its loathsomeness, the terrible rapidity with which it spreads, its insidious nature (commencing with a seemingly harmless spot), and then its incurability

God is trying to teach Moses that even the most defiled person, in His hands, can be exactly what He wants. Even a leper, a total outcast, God can use. God is trying to tell us, "I don't care what sin is driving you up the wall; I don't care about your past or how dirty or defiled you think you are, how disabling you think your sin is, or how much you think it separates you from Me, I can heal, I can restore, and I can use you."

There is a wonderful passage in Scripture that says "God will restore the years the locust has eaten."

**This third sign** is unspeakably solemn. Its position in the series supplies the key to its interpretation. This third sign was to be wrought only if the testimony of the first two was refused. It therefore tells of the *consequences* of refusing to believe what the other signs so plainly bore witness to that God meant business. God says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him. He says, "Moses, I gave you two out of three, now I expect, on that basis, for you to act on the third in faith, because faith is the only thing that is going to please Me.

The three signs –

Serpent representing death, Satan's bondage.

Leprosy – the ultimate separation and defilement, God's holiness can cure any defilement that separates man from God.

Nile water to blood, The Nile symbolised life, blood symbolised life, and spilled blood represents sacrifice – redemption.

You would think that what God has said and done so far would be enough for Moses, wouldn't you? None of Moses' personal power or previous upbringing is involved in these signs. What is required is just a simple trust in God.

Exodus 4:10-12

#### **Excuse 4**

But I'm no good at public speaking

Moses is desperate. Like a fish on the end of a hook wanting to get away. (4:10) Stephen (in the NT) reminds us that "Moses was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action." Acts 7:22 Did he think that Gods would not know this? Had Moses forgotten his past so much? Had the desert blunted this obvious ability of his? Was Moses really inadequate for the task? Had God got it wrong? Did Moses know best?

#### **Response 4**

God's reply – I will help you

Moses, I am God. (4:11-12) Moses did not need a refresher course in public speaking. All Moses needed was to trust in God's ability and promise to support his weakness with divine strength.

"I'm not looking for your talent, Moses. I'm looking for obedience. You're not going in your power. You're going in Mine."

Exodus 4:13-17

**Excuse 5** PLEASE send someone else

Moses did not want to Go. Some one else would do a better job. "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."(13) The ultimate lie – No Lord!

**Response 5** God's response – No more rebellion

God is tired of Moses excuses, so yields again and lets Aaron, Moses brother who later proves to be a weak, idolatrous, lying, backstabbing racist to be his spokesman. Nice choice God. Moses has to give up and go!

Aaron is a nothing, an idolatrous person. He is the one who makes the golden calf for the people's orgy that almost gets them killed. He deliberately designed it with a graven tool, then lies about having done it, so he's also a liar. He's jealous of his brother, speaks against him. He is a racist, speaking against Moses because he married a Cushite. Aaron's a nothing.

## **Summary**

Have you ever argued with God? What excuses to we give God?

When God calls us to do something and we object or drag our feet, we are saying, "I am more afraid of that which you have called me to or that person you have called me to go to than I am of You, the Lord God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth."

Now that is a pretty ridiculous statement. But that is exactly what we do all the time.

When we refuse to step out by faith when God calls us to do something, we are saying, "I am more afraid of my circumstances than I am of the God of those circumstances. I am more afraid of that creature (a person or a viper) over there than I am of the



Creator who made him. I am more afraid of the attacks of Satan or the problems of the flesh than I am of the God who has already given me victory over them."

### **Application**

We can resist God's will or submit to it.

1. We need to know a call is from God, it will always be consistent with scripture. (How well do we know it?) If unsure bounce the idea off those you know who know Gods word.
2. Be confident that with God's call comes Gods power  
2.Cor.12:9 "my power is made perfect in weakness."  
But we don't need to have all the answers in advance.

### **Conclusion**

The disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it" Mark.16:20

God has not changed

His word has not changed

Have his disciples (us) changed ?

Paul said " My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."

1 Cor2:4-5

he proceeds to offer five excuses as to why he will not and cannot go.

## Pleading for a release with false humility

. And so here is Moses with his focus in the wrong place again. He is still hurting. 40 years later he is still hurting from that rejection, "How can I go to Pharaoh. He wants to kill me. Why should I go to the sons of Israel? They rejected me before. They said, 'Who made you a prince and judge over us?'" For 40 years the flesh of Moses hasn't changed. The self-pity sticks out like a sore thumb, and it has blinded him, of course, to the God of the universe, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

We have the same problem. Every time we focus on ourselves, on how tough things are in our lives, how we have been rejected and people don't appreciate us, we sink right down into this pit of self-pity with Moses.

Moses did not see himself as God did, so he tried to convince God he was not the right person for the job.

(3:13) Moses was afraid of looking foolish before the Hebrews. I don't have all the answers. I don't want to be embarrassed. I'll stay here and do nothing thank you very much. Who shall I say sent me?

How disciplined are we with God's word? Peter asks "Be prepared to give a reason for the hope you have." 1 Peter 3:15. We don't have to have all the answers before we do anything, neither can we let His work stand still by pleading ignorance.

(14-15) The answer to the question is I AM has sent you, but above that the assurance God is with him. "say ... God ... has sent me to you." (15)

Dr. Pentecost says, "It contains each tense of the verb 'to be', and might be translated, I was, I am, and I shall always continue to be." The principle contained in this word of Jehovah to Moses contains timely instruction for us

Yahweh starts all the way back in Genesis 2 saying, "I am the eternal existing God who is always there." It comes from the Hebrew verb "to be." It can either mean "I am what I am" or "I will be that I will be."

, the God Joseph warned them about, the God who would deliver them someday and that is why he wanted to be embalmed and set in a coffin not a tomb. When they left he wanted to have his coffin carried to the Promised Land and buried there.'

In any bargaining situation always give your opponent the easiest possible way to agree with you and still save face. This is not some wild deceit. It was just part of mid-eastern bargaining in that day. It still is today, apparently.

. In a culture where face was everything you made it as easy as possible for your opponent to agree but still save face. So you start low and work your way up.

Our God has met us, and our God has demanded that we go out three days journey and worship Him." Do you see what God is making the Hebrews do? He is saying, "Make a choice between the gods of the Egyptians and the God of Israel."

The battle is between Yahweh, God of the Hebrews, and the gods of the Egyptians. When God is finished, a great number of Egyptians realize that. A mixed multitude leaves. A group of Egyptians go along when the people of Israel leave. God loves the Egyptians. They may be oppressing Israel. They may look at Israel as trash, but God loves those Egyptians.

When God speaks though his anointed leader - he is ignored at their own peril. God was the answer to this and all questions. He is the all-sufficient, all knowing, all God.

He has to grab the snake in the most vulnerable part for him, the tail, which gives the snake all that whipping room. Why is

Depend on God in Egypt and also depend on God in a howling wilderness for 40 years with 2.5-3 million people who are worse than dumb sheep. They gripe all the time and are obedient to God only on rare occasions. He is going to be put in a totally impossible situation in Egypt as a prelude to 40 years of herding people in a totally impossible situation. He has got to understand that he cannot be standing on his own resources at all and that God can use anything, an 80 year old shepherd or a "What's that in your hand?" It could have been a rock. It could have been a toothpick. He is trying to tell Moses, "Whatever you have is all I need. Whatever you are is all I need. All I need is you. I will take care of the rest." We do not need a Seminary training, my friend. We do not need to know Greek and Hebrew and exposition and hermeneutics and homiletics and eschatology

and systematic theology and all the other "ologies" to be a godly woman or a godly man. All we need to be is God's. That is possessive case, and whatever you are He sanctifies. That is what He is trying to teach Moses here, so He gives him a little snake trip.

What kind of a witness will these signs be to the Jews?