

Exodus Chapters Four to Six

Read 4:18-23

v. 17-20 – Moses clung tightly to “the staff of God”. It was his assurance of God’s presence and power. In a lyric from Steven Curtis Chapman he writes: *“I will hold on to the hand of my Savior, And I will hold on with all my might, I will hold loosely to things that are fleeting, And hold on to Jesus for life”* (“Hold On to Jesus”). Read 1 Corinthians 15:2, Titus 1:9

v. 19-23 - God tells Moses how events will unfold in Egypt. God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but He never did it *against* Pharaoh's will. As later chapters of Exodus show, Pharaoh would harden his own heart at the first five signs God gave him through Moses. After that, God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, allowing Pharaoh's heart to do what it wanted - God was giving Pharaoh over to his sin. Look up: Romans 1:24-26

God then predicts how the struggle was to end: since Pharaoh would not let his “firstborn,” that is, Israel, go to worship, God would kill Pharaoh’s firstborn son – the final plague.

Read 4:24-26

The son of Moses had not been circumcised in accordance with the Abrahamic covenant of Gen 17:9-14. God intended to punish this disobedience of Moses. His wife however took a knife and cut off the foreskin of her son. Neglecting to circumcise the child exposed him to being cut off from his people, and would have resulted in a loss of inheritance for that branch of the family. This consequence was barely prevented by his wife’s prompt obedience. Zipporah was not an Israelite and may have thought this was a barbaric custom.

This strange account emphasizes the importance of obeying God, and the importance of choosing a spouse who will commit with you to walk together in obedience with the Lord. Look up: 2 Corinthians 6:14

Read 4:27-31 – God had told Moses the people would believe him! (Ex. 3:18, 4:1)

Read 5:1-21

v.1-9 – Pharaoh was familiar with many gods as Egypt was filled with them, but he had never heard of Yahweh, the God of Israel. Pharaoh would not listen to these men because he did not know or respect God. When others reject us or our faith we shouldn’t be surprised or discouraged. Like Moses and Aaron, it often takes persistence and consistency to be heard.

v.15-21 – The Israelite foremen were caught in the middle. First they tried to get the people to keep up production, then they complained to Pharaoh, and finally they cursed Moses and Aaron. We too can find ourselves in the middle of conflicts. In this situation God had a greater purpose in mind. When we feel pressured it is best to pray, take a breath, and examine what God might be accomplishing through the situation.

Read 5:22-6:13

v.22-23 – Moses will complain again in v.12 that his “faltering lips” (or unskilled speech) is the reason why he should not be the messenger. This is not surprising; He had been rejected by Pharaoh and cursed by his countrymen. Moses simply felt rejected and ineffectual to accomplish the task. Jesus was mocked by leaders and rejected by His own people. The Christian life is not free of negative reactions or even hurtful replies. Look up: 1 Corinthians 15:58

v.13 - Moses wanted to give up after the first setback, but God had not given up on Moses. God was preparing Moses to deal with all the discouragement ahead as he will lead an often frustrated people to the Promised Land. Faith is the ability to be obedient to God’s will even when it seems contrary to our needs or wants; this is patient endurance in the Lord. Hebrews 12:1-3

Read 6:28-30

God previously commanded Moses to speak to Pharaoh. After his first disappointing experience, Moses once again hesitates in his obedience. The KJV Bible reads: *“I am of uncircumcised lips”*. The physical act of circumcision was a display of obedience declaring that an individual would be “spirit-led” and not led by the flesh. Moses felt as a mere man he was unworthy of the task. Moses’ words here reflect those of the prophet Isaiah, who felt unworthy of communicating God’s glory and power (Isaiah 6:5-8), and of the prophet Jeremiah, who thought he was too young (Jeremiah 1:6-9).