

Moses and Aaron Visit King Pharaoh

(Exodus 4:17 - 7:13)

Introduction

The last two weeks we have learned that God spoke to Moses from a burning bush to get his attention because He had a very important job for him to do.

Ask: What job did God give Moses to do?

God wanted Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

Moses was overwhelmed by the task God gave him to do. On one hand, it wouldn't be easy to convince the children of Israel that God had chosen him to lead them out of Egypt. And, on the other hand, it wouldn't be easy to convince Pharaoh to let the people go. He didn't want to lose his free workers.

Last week we learned that Moses tried to wiggle out of this big job God had given him to do. He argued and argued with God. First, Moses told God he didn't have the qualifications, he said, "*Who am I to go before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?*" But God told him, "*I will be with you.*" And, then God gave him some signs of His power.

Ask: What did God do to prove to Moses that He is all powerful?

God turned Moses' staff into a snake and then back into a stick; and then, He caused Moses' hand to get leprosy and then He healed it.

Next, Moses told God he was not good at speaking to people. He said, "*Lord, I'm not very good with words. What if the people don't believe me?*" So, God told Moses that he could take his brother, Aaron, with him to do all the talking.

Before we start our lesson this morning, let's open in prayer.

Opening Prayer

Father, help us to remember that you are always with us and that you will give us everything we need to accomplish what You ask us to do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say. (Exodus 4:12)

Lesson

We pick up the story after Moses said, "good bye" to Jethro to return to Egypt.

Exodus 4:21

And the LORD told Moses, "When you arrive back in Egypt, go to Pharaoh and perform all the miracles I have empowered you to do. But I will harden his heart so he will refuse to let the people go."

The first thing God wanted Moses to do was meet with his brother, Aaron, to tell him what God had said they must do.

Exodus 4:27

Now the LORD had said to Aaron, "Go out into the wilderness to meet Moses." So Aaron went and met Moses at the mountain of God, and he embraced him.

Aaron came from Egypt to Mount Sinai where God had been speaking to Moses in the burning bush.

Exodus 4:28

Moses then told Aaron everything the LORD had commanded him to say. And he told him about the miraculous signs the LORD had commanded him to perform.

Then, Moses and Aaron returned to Egypt and called the leaders of the children of Israel to a meeting.

Exodus 4:29-31

Then Moses and Aaron returned to Egypt and called all the elders of Israel together. (30) Aaron told them everything the LORD had told Moses, and Moses performed the miraculous signs as they watched. (31) Then the people of Israel were convinced that the LORD had sent Moses and Aaron. When they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.

The people were happy to hear that God had seen their misery and was going to set them free.

Exodus 5:1

After this presentation to Israel's leaders, Moses and Aaron went and spoke to Pharaoh. They told him, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go so they may hold a festival in my honor in the wilderness."

But Pharaoh wasn't happy about letting his slaves go.

Exodus 5:2

"Is that so?" retorted Pharaoh. "And who is the LORD? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the LORD, and I will not let Israel go."

Pharaoh would not listen to Moses and Aaron because he did not know God. In fact, Pharaoh thought he was a god!

Exodus 5:3

But Aaron and Moses persisted. "The God of the Hebrews has met with us," they declared. "So let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness so we can offer sacrifices to the LORD our God. If we don't, he will kill us with a plague or with the sword."

Pharaoh didn't take Moses seriously and just thought he was distracting the people from their work.

Exodus 5:4-5

Pharaoh replied, "Moses and Aaron, why are you distracting the people from their tasks? Get back to work! (5) Look, there are many of your people in the land, and you are stopping them from their work."

Pharaoh thought the people must have too much time on their hands and laid more work on the people.

Exodus 5:6-7

That same day Pharaoh sent this order to the Egyptian slave drivers and the Israelite foremen: "Do not supply any more straw for making bricks. Make the people get it themselves!"

[Note: Bricks are made by mixing mud with hay.]

The Egyptians no longer brought the Israelites straw to make the bricks. They had to go and find it for themselves. But they still had to make just as many bricks as they did before.

The taskmasters were brutal. They whipped the Israeli workers to get them to work faster. This made the people angry. They went to Pharaoh to ask him to be merciful, but Pharaoh wouldn't back down. So, the people came back in anger against Moses and Aaron...

Exodus 5:21

The foremen said to them, "May the LORD judge and punish you for making us stink before Pharaoh and his officials. You have put a sword into their hands, an excuse to kill us!"

The people were saying to Moses and Aaron, "You have only made things worse for us. Now the Egyptians are trying to kill us."

Moses and Aaron were so discouraged, they went back to talk with God.

When we get discouraged that's exactly what we need to do, too — talk to God, tell Him what you feel and ask Him for wisdom.

Exodus 5:22-23

Then Moses went back to the LORD and protested, "Why have you brought all this trouble on your own people, Lord? Why did you send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh as your spokesman, he has been even more brutal to your people. And you have done nothing to rescue them!"

Moses is saying, "Why did You ever send me if You were going to do this to them? Ever since I gave Pharaoh Your message, he has only been more and more brutal to them, and You have not delivered them at all!"

Moses expected faster results and fewer problems. When God is at work, setbacks and hardships may still occur. Remember, problems develop our patience and character by teaching us to trust God to do what is best for us. We need to look for ways to honor God in our present situation, and remember that He will not abandon us.

God encourages Moses by reminding him of His promise...

Exodus 6:6-8

"Therefore, say to the people of Israel: 'I am the LORD. I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt. I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your very own possession. I am the LORD!'"

Once again, God tells Moses and Aaron to go back to Pharaoh and tell him he must let the people go.

Exodus 7:2-3

Tell Aaron everything I command you, and Aaron must command Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave his country. But I will make Pharaoh's heart stubborn so I can multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.

Notice that God said that He would "harden Pharaoh's heart..." God is saying that He will cause Pharaoh to stubbornly refuse to obey God's command.

Ask: Why would God harden Pharaoh's heart so that he would refuse to let the people go? [Let the children respond.]

Let's go on, God explains His plan to Moses to bring great judgment on the Egyptians.

Exodus 7:4-5

Even then Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you. So I will bring down my fist on Egypt. Then I will rescue my forces—my people, the Israelites—from the land of Egypt with great acts of judgment. When I raise my powerful hand and bring out the Israelites, the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD."

God was compelled (required, duty-bound) to punish the Egyptians because they mistreated His chosen people, the children of Israel.

Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

God wanted to prove His mighty power to both the Egyptians and the Israelites so they would believe that He is the only true God, the Almighty master of the universe!

Then the Lord told Moses and Aaron that the Pharaoh will demand that they show him a miracle to prove that God has sent them...

Exodus 7:8-9

Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Pharaoh will demand, 'Show me a miracle.' When he does this, say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down in front of Pharaoh, and it will become a serpent.'"

God wanted Moses and Aaron to show His power to the Egyptians so they will believe that He is God.

Exodus 7:10

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did what the LORD had commanded them. Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a serpent!

Pharaoh was not easily impressed. He called for his magicians...

Exodus 7:11-12

Then Pharaoh called in his own wise men and sorcerers, and these Egyptian magicians did the same thing with their magic. They threw down their staffs, which also became serpents! But then Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.

Ask: How were these magicians able to copy Moses' miracles?

Do not underestimate Satan's power. The Egyptians practiced magic in their religion. Although miracles can help us believe, it is dangerous to rely on them since Satan can imitate some parts of God's work and lead people astray. We need to let the Word of God be the basis of our faith, not signs and wonders.

Matthew 24:24

For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones.

Pharaoh still would not listen to Moses and Aaron even when he saw the miracle of the rod turning into a snake.

Exodus 7:13

Pharaoh's heart, however, remained hard. He still refused to listen, just as the LORD had predicted.

Moses was finding out that doing God's will wasn't all that easy. Pharaoh was a real stumbling block to leading the people out of Egypt, wasn't he? It was tough trying to convince Pharaoh that he needed to believe in God and to do what He commanded.

Sometimes it's hard to convince people that God is the only true God and that we should follow His way. God sometimes uses hard circumstances to get people's attention.

Pharaoh would not listen to Moses because he did not know and respect God. We meet people like that, too. We need to pray that God will help them see who He really is.

God wants us to keep on telling people about Him. Be persistent! Don't get discouraged, no matter what others say or think. *Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say.* (Exodus 4:12)

Closing Prayer

Lord, thousands of people are rejecting You every day and it grieves our hearts to think that they will spend all of eternity separated from You. Give us the courage and the persistence to keep on telling people about You even when they reject us and our message. Help us not to get discouraged. We want You to use us to help people see who You really are so that Your name will be high and lifted up throughout the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Game Center

Who Am I?

Pin the name of a character from the Exodus 1 – 5 on the back of each child. They must ask **Yes** or **No** questions about to determine which character they are.

Characters might be Moses, Aaron, Moses's Mother, Moses' sister, the princess, taskmaster, Israeli slaves, Jethro, Zipporah.

You could turn this into Charades and have the child act out (pantomime) a character for their team to guess. 1,000 Points for a correct answer in the first guess; remove 100 points for every guess. So, if the team guesses the correct character in 4 guesses, their team would get 600 points.

Or, use the following review questions in another game:

1. Why were the children of Israel in Egypt? Why didn't they live in Israel? (A great famine in the Land brought Jacob's (or Israel's) family to Egypt because there was plenty of food there.)
2. What were the Israelites doing in Egypt at this point in their history, 400 years later? (They were working as slaves making bricks which were used as the building materials for Pharaoh's building projects.)
3. How did they make the bricks? (They mixed straw with mud to make the bricks stronger and more durable.)
4. Why was Moses trying to wiggle out of the task God had assigned him to? (He knew it wouldn't be easy to convince the children of Israel that he was God's chosen one AND he knew it wouldn't be easy to convince Pharaoh to let the people leave.)
5. Why did Pharaoh want to keep the people and not let them go? (He didn't want to lose all his free laborers.)
6. What miracles did God do to finally convince Moses that He would provide the wisdom, peace, strength and courage he needed to lead the Israelites to the Promised Land? (The rod turned into a snake and back to a stick, and the hand turned leprous and back to normal.)
7. What was Pharaoh's reaction to Moses and Aaron when they told him that God wanted them to go into the wilderness to hold a feast? (Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?")
8. Why didn't Pharaoh listen and obey God's command? (He did not know or respect God; he didn't believe in God.)
9. What did Pharaoh do to the people of Israel after they asked to leave? (He laid more work on them. They had to make bricks without straw yet produce the same number of bricks.)
10. How did the people feel towards Moses and Aaron when Pharaoh laid more work on them? (They were angry against Moses and Aaron and blamed them for the extra work.)
11. How did Moses and Aaron feel towards God when the people turned against them? (They were angry and discouraged. Moses expected faster results and fewer problems.)
12. Why does God allow us to go through trials? (They help develop our patience and character by teaching us to trust God to do what is best for us.)
13. How did God encourage Moses? (By reminding him of His promise to bring the people into the land and out of bondage.)
14. When we are discouraged what's the best way to get a good attitude again? (By remembering God's promises like Moses did!)
15. Why was it God's plan to harden Pharaoh's heart against the Israelites? (If Pharaoh let the people go right away, it would have been so easy that Moses could have taken the credit for it. God wanted to prove His mighty power to both the Egyptians and to the children of Israel so that they would have no doubt that He is the only true God, master of the universe!)
16. What did Moses and Aaron do when Pharaoh asked for a miracle to prove that God had sent them? (Aaron took Moses' rod and cast it before Pharaoh and it became a serpent.)

17. When Moses' rod turned into a serpent, what did Pharaoh do? (He sent for his magicians and they threw down their rods and they became snakes, too.)
18. What did Moses' serpent do to the other snakes? (Ate them.)
19. How were these magicians able to copy Moses' miracle? (By the power of Satan. Not all signs and wonders come from the hand of God.)

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