

The jewelry was partly used later in making the vessels of the tabernacle (Ex. 35:22). Alas, some of it went into the golden calf (32:2).

THE TEXT OF EXODUS
TRANSLATION

4 And Mo-ses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Je-ho-vah hath not appeared unto thee. (2) And Je-ho-vah said unto him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod. (3) And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Mo-ses fled from before it. (4) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail (and he put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand); (5) that they may believe that Je-ho-vah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of I-saac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. (6) And Je-ho-vah said furthermore unto him; Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. (7) And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. (And he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.) (8) And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. (9) And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe even these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the river shall become blood upon the dry land. (10) And Mo-ses said unto Je-ho-vah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. (11) And Je-ho-vah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Je-ho-vah? (12) Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak. (13) And he said, Oh, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. (14) And the anger of Je-ho-vah

was kindled against Mo-ses, and he said, Is there not Aaron thy brother the Le-vite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. (15) And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. (16) And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God. (17) And thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do the signs. (18) And Mo-ses went and returned to Je-thro his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren that are in E-gypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Je-thro said to Mo-ses, Go in peace. (19) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses in Mid-i-an, Go, return into E-gypt; for all the men are dead that sought thy life. (20) And Mo-ses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of E-gypt: and Mo-ses took the rod of God in his hand. (21) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses. When thou goest back into E-gypt, see that thou do before Pha-raoh all the wonders which I have put in thy hand: but I will harden his heart, and he will not let the people go. (22) And thou shalt say unto Pha-raoh, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, Is-ra-el is my son, my first-born: (23) and I have said unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me; and thou hast refused to let him go: behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born. (24) And it came to pass on the way at the lodging-place, that Je-ho-vah met him, and sought to kill him. (25) Then Zip-po-rah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet; and she said, Surely a bridegroom of blood art thou to me. (26) So he let him alone. Then she said, A bridegroom of blood *art thou*, because of the circumcision.

(27) And Je-ho-vah said to Aar-on, Go into the wilderness to meet Mo-ses. And he went, and met him in the mountain of God, and kissed him. (28) And Mo-ses told Aar-on all the words of Je-ho-vah wherewith he had sent him, and all the signs wherewith he had charged him. (29) And Mo-ses and Aar-on went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Is-ra-el: (30)

and Aar-on spake all the words which Je-ho-vah had spoken unto Mo-ses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. (31) And the people believed: and when they heard that Je-ho-vah had visited the children of Is-ra-el, and that he had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER FOUR
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After reading the chapter carefully, propose a short topic or theme for it.
2. How did Moses think the Israelites would respond to his message (4:1)? How did God say they would respond (3:18)? How did they finally respond (4:31)?
3. What did Moses have in his hand? (4:2)
4. Can you name other Bible characters who used for God the things that they had in their hands?
5. What happened to Moses' rod? How did Moses react? (4:3)
6. How was the rod restored? (4:4)
7. List the references in chapters three and four where God refers to Himself as the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."
8. What was the second miracle Moses was empowered to do? (4:6)
9. What color was leprosy? (4:6) Check the cross references in your Bible on this.
10. How was Moses' leprosy removed? (4:7)
11. What miracle would certainly convince the people? (4:8)
12. What third miracle was Moses empowered to do? (4:9)
13. Was this third miracle ever used? Compare Ex. 7:18-19.
14. What excuse did Moses give pertaining to his voice? (4:10)
15. Was Moses really NOT able to speak well? Compare Ex. 20:19-20; 24:7; 32:26-28; Deut. 1:1ff.
16. Who makes every man's mouth, and men's other abilities? (4:11)
17. What is the application of the questions in 4:11 to Moses?
18. How would Moses know what to say? (4:12)
19. When God inspired men to reveal His will, did God give them words or just general ideas? (4:12, 15; Compare Num. 22:38)

20. Putting 4:13 into blunt modern English, what did Moses ask God to do?
21. How did God react to Moses' unwillingness? (4:14)
22. Who was Moses' brother?
23. What ability did Moses' brother have?
24. What feelings would Aaron have upon seeing Moses?
25. How long had it been since Aaron had seen Moses? (See Acts 7:23, 30)
26. What was Aaron to be for Moses? (4:16; 7:1)
27. How could Moses be a *God* to Aaron? (4:16)
28. How significant was the rod in Moses' later deeds? (4:17, 20; 7:15; 14:16)
29. From who did Moses ask permission to leave? (4:18)
30. Was this permission granted?
31. What possible reason was there for God's repeating his commission to Moses in Midian? (4:19)
32. Which direction was Midian from Mt. Horeb (Sinai)?
33. Who had once sought Moses' life? (4:19; 2:15). What had happened since then?
34. How many sons did Moses have? (See 18:2-4)
35. How many rode on one ass? (4:20)
36. How is Moses' rod described? (4:20)
37. What was Moses to be sure to do in Egypt? (4:21)
38. What would God do to Pharaoh? (4:21)
39. Was it fair for God to harden Pharaoh's heart? (Compare Rom. 9:14-24)
40. What relationship did Israel bear unto God? (4:22; Ex. 6:7; Compare II Cor. 6:18). How did this relationship come to exist? (See Deut. 4:37, 20; Ex. 19:5-6)
41. What threat was to be made unto Pharaoh? (4:23)
42. When was this threat carried out? (12:27, 29)
43. Where did the Lord "meet" Moses and his family? (4:24)
44. What did the Lord seek to do to Moses? By what means was the Lord doing this? (4:24-25)
45. Why was the Lord so extreme in his treatment of Moses just because Moses' son had not been circumcised? (Compare Gen. 17:10-14)

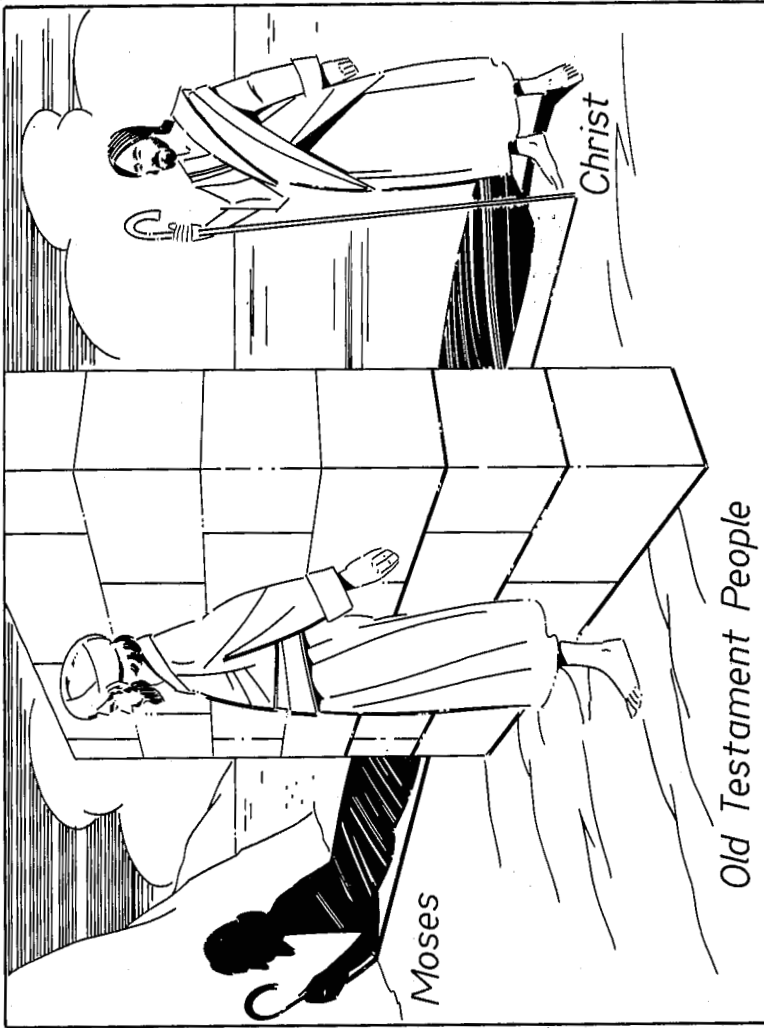
46. How did Moses and his family discover that the uncircumcision of the son was the cause of Moses' trouble? (4:25). (At least propose some answer.)
47. Who circumcised the son?
48. How did she like this job? Explain the meaning of "A bloody husband . . . because of the circumcision."
49. Did Zipporah and the sons accompany Moses on to Egypt? (4:29; 18:1-3)
50. Why did Aaron go out into the wilderness of Sinai? (Ex. 4:27)
51. Where did Aaron and Moses meet? (4:27)
52. With what act did Aaron greet Moses? (4:27)
53. What did Moses tell Aaron about? (4:28)
54. Did Moses show Aaron the signs (miracles)? (4:28)
55. What did Moses and Aaron gather together in Egypt? (4:29; 3:16)
56. Who did the talking to the Israelites? (4:28)
57. Who did the signs before the people? (4:30)
58. How did the people react when they heard the words and saw the signs? (Give two answers; 4:31)
59. What is the significance of the verb *visited* in 4:31?

EXODUS FOUR: HESITANCY OF GOD'S MAN

- A. Fear the people would not believe; 4:1ff.
- B. Fear of his slow speech; 4:10ff.
- C. In need of having his commission repeated; 4:19.
- D. Personal failure to obey God's covenant; 4:24ff.
- E. Victory when hesitancy is overcome; 4:27-31.

MOSES, A TYPE OF CHRIST

(A *type* is some person, thing or event in the Old Testament age which resembled and foreshadowed a similar person, thing, or event in the New Testament. The *antitype* is that person, thing, or event in the New Testament which was foreshadowed by



PEOPLE LIVING ON THE OLD TESTAMENT SIDE OF THE WALL OF TIME
COULD SEE IN MOSES AND SUCH LEADERS A FORESHADOWING, OR TYPE,
OF CHRIST, THE GREATER ONE WHO WAS TO COME.

ISRAEL, A TYPE OF THE CHURCH (I Cor. 10:1-11)

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|----------------------|---|---------------------------|---|---|
| Bondage in Egypt | R | Freedom from Egypt | | |
| Deliverer (Moses) | E | Heavenly food provided | J | C |
| Moses believed | D | Law of Moses | O | A |
| Egypt forsaken | S | Tabernacle worship | R | N |
| Passover | E | Unfaithful perished | D | A |
| | A | Faithful entered | A | N |

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| | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------------|---|---|
| Bondage in sin | B | Freedom from sin | | |
| Deliverer (Christ) | A | Heavenly food provided | D | H |
| Christ believed | P | Law of Christ | E | E |
| Sin forsaken | T | Church worship | A | V |
| Death of Christ | I | Unfaithful to perish | T | E |
| | S | Faithful enter | H | N |
| | M | | | |

the Old Testament type.)

People on the Old Testament side of the wall of time could see only the shadow. We see both the shadow (Moses) and the substance (Christ) that cast the shadow.

Moses said that God would raise up a prophet, *like unto me*. (Deut. 18:15, 18; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37).

1. Christ, like Moses, was a prophet. (Matt. 13:57; Deut. 34:10)
2. Christ, like Moses, was a lawgiver. (John 1:17; Gal. 6:2)
3. Christ, like Moses, was saved as a babe.
4. Christ, like Moses, came as a peacemaker. (Luke 19:42; Ex. 2:13)
5. Christ, like Moses, was commissioned by God. (John 5:30; Ex. 3:10)
6. Christ, like Moses, came working miracles. (John 12:37)
7. Christ, like Moses, came preaching deliverance. (Luke 4:18; Ex. 4:29-30)
8. Christ, like Moses, was rejected by many. (Acts 7:23-39, 51-52)
9. Christ, like Moses, put His brethren (the church!) before his own interests (Heb. 2:14-15; Ex. 32:31-32).

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER FOUR

1. *Why was Moses so sure that Israel would not believe him?* (4:1).

a. There was no reason why thou should believe a long-absent, sheep-herding, fugitive, who had already failed in one attempt to deliver them.

b. It had been 430 years since God had spoken directly to any Israelite.

They were not accustomed to communications from God.

2. *Did Moses' excuse (in 4:1) indicate that he lacked faith?*

It is easy to think that he did. God had said that Israel would hearken (3:18). Moses said that they would not believe. It turned out that God was right (as always).

However, because Moses finally did obey, and because he

is called a man of faith (Heb. 11:24-29), we are reluctant to say he lacked faith.

3. *Would the people accept Yahweh (the LORD) as God's name? (4:1; 3:13-15).*

Moses seemed to assume that they would do so. The name was almost certainly familiar to some Israelite elders from their knowledge of the distant past. They would recognize it, and use it in speaking of God.

4. *What was the rod of Moses? (4:2).*

Probably only the familiar shepherd's crook, as in Psalm 23:4. This rod became extremely prominent in the acts of Moses and Aaron in later chapters. "Thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs" (4:17).

5. *What special force was there in the rod-to-serpent miracle?*

A carving of a serpent (cobra, or uraeus) was placed upon the front of the crown by many Pharaoh's. It was a symbol of the royal power in lower Egypt. Thus Moses' miracle gave the appearance of an intentional attack upon Egypt's supreme authority.

Also, an Egyptian goddess, Buto, was depicted in serpent form. She was the protectress of Egypt's northern capital. The miracle discredited her power.

Behind all this lay also the fact that the serpent has been the constant enemy of the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). It was the representative and tool of Satan (Rev. 12:9). At the basic level, Israel's deliverance involved a confrontation with the devil himself.

6. *When did Moses use the rod-to-serpent sign?*

He showed it to the elders of Egypt (4:30), and before Pharaoh during his second confrontation with him (7:10).

7. *Whose name was to be made vivid by the miracle of the rod?*

The name of the LORD (Jehovah, Yahweh), the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham . . ." (Ex. 4:5). Note the continued emphasis upon God's name, and upon God's association with their forefathers (Ex. 2:24; 3:15-16; 4:5; 6:2; et al).

8. *What particular significance was there in the sign of the*

leprous hand? (4:6).

a. It displayed the limitless and superhuman power of God. Leprosy usually was a disease of long duration. Even the ceremony for cleansing it took eight days (Lev. 14:8-10). But in the case of Moses, the infection, the cure, and the cleansing were all immediate.

b. The leprosy suggested the uncleanness of the people. Compare Lev. 13:45. Moses came to them when they were an unclean people. But God could make the unclean clean.

9. *Was leprosy always white?* (4:6).

Often it was white: Miriam (Numbers 12:10); Elisha's servant Gehazi (II Kings 5:27); Lev. 13:3. We do not think that the leprosy of the Bible was the same disease as Hansen's disease, now called leprosy. The whiteness that is so commonly associated with Biblical leprosy is not associated with Hansen's disease.

10. *Were Moses' miracles convincing to the Israelites?* (4:8)

Yes, at least temporarily. They were convinced, until subsequent difficulties arose. Then they seemed to forget the miracles, and doubt the constant infinite power of God.

In the same manner the miracles of Christ did not produce an unshakeable faith in most of the people who saw them (John 12:37). People whose faith depends upon seeing signs often require a steady stream of miracles, or they forsake Christ. See John 6:14, 30.

In doing these miracles Moses was a type of Christ, who also came working miracles (Deut. 18:15).

11. *Was the miracle of changing water to blood used by Moses?* (4:9)

We have no record that Moses did this miracle in Egypt. The first of the ten plagues consisted of a similar miracle on a nation-wide scale (Ex. 7:20-25).

12. *Was Moses' excuse about not being eloquent a good excuse?* (4:10)

No; it was a miserable excuse, and God did not accept it.

Moses' great ability to speak afterwards shows that he really was an able speaker. For example, note 32:11-13. The

whole book of Deuteronomy consists of eloquent speeches by Moses.

Moses' excuse here comes close to blaming God for his imagined difficulty in speech. He said, in paraphrase, "I was not eloquent before now, and I have not miraculously become eloquent since you began speaking to me. How then can you expect me to speak?"

Eloquence was highly regarded by the Egyptians as a means for bringing about social justice and political decisions. One Egyptian story, called the "Tale of the Eloquent Peasant"¹ is an Egyptian classic. It was written in the Egyptian Middle Kingdom (about 2000 B.C.), before Moses' time.

Moses had to learn that the working of God's power does not depend upon human eloquence and wisdom (I Cor. 2:1, 4). Many people thought the speech of the apostle Paul was of no account (II Cor. 10:10). But his influence was powerful, in spite of this. When we appear weak in ourselves, the power of God may become more obvious and more potent in us (II Cor. 12:9-10).

But at that moment Moses could only feel that he was slow of speech (meaning he had a hard time recalling words) and was of a slow tongue (he had a hard time forming the words in his mouth).

13. *Who gives people their abilities or disabilities? (4:11)*

Yahweh, the LORD! "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" (I Cor. 4:7). Nothing! Therefore, we must neither low-rate the abilities God has given us (and therefore hesitate to use them), or overrate them (and become conceited).

King James version has "*the* dumb, or deaf, or *the* seeing, or *the* blind." The *the*'s are not actually in the Hebrew text. It appears from the scripture that God causes or allows some people to be handicapped and some to be more capable (John 9:1-3). But it is probably an overstatement to say that

¹Translated by John A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 407-410.

God is responsible for all the cases of blindness or deafness that exist.

14. *Does God provide to his spokesmen words, or just general ideas?* (4:12, 15)

He taught Moses "what you shall say." This involved general knowledge and ideas, but also frequently specific words. To Jeremiah God gave words (Jer. 1:9). To Paul also (I Cor. 2:13). Prophetic inspiration often times involved dictation of divine words. Many scholars of modern times resist this idea with some passion, but it is still true.

We must be careful as believers not to claim the kind of word-by-word revelations that God has given once-for-all to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3:5; Jude 3). We are promised wisdom (James 1:5), but apparently not the miraculous revelations of words and thoughts such as Moses and the prophets received.

15. *How did Moses show his basic reluctance to go?* (4:13)

By asking God to send someone else. God had told HIM to go (4:13). He asked God to send someone else. In order that his request might not sound so blunt, Moses stated it with extra superfluous words: "Send by the hand (that is, by the power and efforts) or him whom thou wilt send." In fact, God was doing exactly what Moses asked him to do: God had decided to deliver Israel by Moses' hand, and was therefore sending Moses. God became angry with Moses' unwillingness (4:14).

16. *Who would help Moses with the speaking?* (4:14)

Aaron, Moses' brother, who could speak well, was at that very time coming to see Moses. Probably Aaron was coming to visit Moses to report the good news of the death of the king (2:23; 4:19). He could not have known just then that the new pharaoh would be as bad as the former one. Aaron would rejoice from his heart upon seeing Moses. It would be interesting to us to know just how Aaron learned of Moses' whereabouts.

Aaron is called the "Levite," although he would have been no more a Levite by race than Moses would have been. It

would seem that the title "Levite" had taken on some technical connotation of "teacher" or "spokesman."

The reference to Aaron in 4:14 is the first mention of him.

17. *How would Moses use Aaron's assistance? (4:15)*

Moses would put the words (of God) into Aaron's mouth (by first putting them into his ears) (Ex. 4:30). We wonder why Moses could not himself speak to Pharaoh if he could speak the words to Aaron. The fact that Moses put THE words into Aaron's mouth reveals the definiteness of God's communication with Moses (Compare Num. 22:38; 23:5; Isa. 51:16). God would direct both Moses' mouth so he would speak to Aaron correctly, and with Aaron's mouth so he would relay the message correctly. This passage indicates much about how inspiration worked as "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21).

18. *How could Moses be as God to Aaron? (4:16)*

Only in the respect that Aaron must get his utterances totally from Moses, just as Moses got his message totally from God. See Ex. 7:1-2, 19.

19. *What function was Moses' rod to play in the events that followed? (4:17)*

By the rod he would perform the signs (miracles). This surely came to pass (7:10, 20; 8:5, 16; and other passages).

Unbelieving critics argue that passages (like 7:19; 8:5) which place the rod in the hand of Aaron are by a different author (P., in post-exilic times!) than passages which place the rod in Moses' hand.² It seems to us that it would be simpler to suggest that this rod was merely passed back and forth between the hands of Moses and Aaron.

20. *Where did Moses go from the burning bush at Horeb? Why? (4:18)*

He returned back to Jethro, probably in the east part of the Sinai peninsula, to ask permission to go back to Egypt. (He doubtless drove the sheep back with him!) The courtesy of Moses and his thoughtfulness of others' feelings are

²*The Broadman Bible Commentary* (1969), Vol. 1, p. 335.

commendable.

Moses did not tell Jethro the whole story about the call at the burning bush to go back and save all Israel, but rather simply said that he wanted to go back and visit his relatives. We cannot condemn Moses for this. Jethro could not have accepted this revelation; he would surely have thought Moses had lost his mind.

Maybe Moses was not yet quite convinced himself. This is suggested by the Lord's repeating the command to go in 4:19. Moses was feeling cold feet.

We admire Jethro's agreeable response to Moses' request. Moses' departure was to involve also the departure of Jethro's daughter and Jethro's grandchildren.

Jethro's name in 4:18 is spelled as *Jether* in the Hebrew Bible. The Greek LXX spells it the same as in 3:1. No significance lies in this slight variation in spelling.

21. *Why the repetition of the command of God to Moses in 4:19?*

As indicated above, Moses was probably still hesitant. Some critics maintain that one supposed source of the text of Exodus (J) said that God called Moses in Midian; another source (E) said that God called him at Horeb.³ This analysis seems to us to overlook the naturalness in God's repeating the command to the still-hesitant Moses. It also ends up contradicting the idea that Moses wrote all of Exodus by attributing different passages in Exodus to different authors living centuries after Moses. Our Lord quoted a passage from Exodus (3:6) and said that it came from the "book of Moses" (Mark 12:26).

22. *When did Moses learn of the death of his enemies in Egypt? (4:19)*

God told him about it at Jethro's house, after he returned from the burning bush at Horeb! There is no indication that he knew it before then. This increases our admiration for Moses greatly. When God first called him, he probably

³W.O.E. Oesterly and T.H. Robinson, *Introduction to the Books of the O.T.* (Cleveland and New York: World, 1965), p. 36.

assumed that at least some of those who had tried once before in Egypt to kill him would still be alive, even if older. In the face of that possibility, he arose to go! Can we possibly be surprised if he showed a little reluctance?

Type: "The men are dead which sought thy life" (Ex. 4:19).

Antitype: "They are dead that sought the young child's (Jesus') life" (Matt. 2:20).

23. *Who went with Moses as he left for Egypt? (4:20)*

His wife and his two sons (Gershom and Eliezer). The second son is here alluded to for the first time. See Ex. 18:3-4. All three apparently sat on one ass! (However, the Greek LXX reads "asses.")

The "rod of God" in Moses' hand is prominently mentioned. This title occurs also in Ex. 17:9. It is called the "rod of GOD" because God used it in such a powerful way.

24. *Would God really harden Pharaoh's heart, and then punish him for his hard-hearted deeds? (4:21)*

Yes, He would. Yes, He did. And for just causes.

The pronoun *I* in "I will harden" is emphatic. God later hardened the heart of Sihon, the Amorite king (Deut. 2:30). Also He hardened the hearts of the Canaanite kings whom Joshua overthrew (Josh. 11:20). God sends strong delusions upon those who receive not the love of the truth (II Thess. 2:10-12).

Rom. 9:17-18: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth."

SPECIAL STUDY — HARDENING PHARAOH'S HEART

In the passages about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, sometimes it says that (1) Pharaoh hardened his own heart; sometimes that (2) his heart was hardened, without any clear

indication as to whether God or Pharaoh himself was the main agent in the hardening; sometimes that (3) God hardened his heart. The following chart shows how these three different statements about hardening Pharaoh's heart occur in the scripture.

There are three different Hebrew words used to describe the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. In the order of the intensity of their meaning they are:

- (1) *Kabad* — To be heavy, or insensible; to be honored; to be dull or unresponsive.
- (2) *Qashah* — To be hard, severe, fierce; to be stiff; to make hard, or harden. (Used only in 7:3 and 13:15)
- (3) *Hazaq* (strongest word) — To be strong, firm, obstinate, stout, rigid; to make strong or strengthen.

The following chart indicates which word is used in each passage.

| A. Hardening Pharaoh's heart: Preliminary predictions and declarations: | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Reference | Pharaoh hardened his own heart. | Indefinite about who hardened it. | God hardened it. |
| 3:19 | King of Egypt will not let you go | | |
| 4:21 | | | I will harden (<i>hazaq</i>) his heart. |
| 5:2 | I will not let Israel go. | | |
| 7:3 | | | I will harden (<i>Qashah</i>) P.'s heart |
| 7:13 | | P.'s heart was hardened (<i>hazaq</i>) | |
| 7:14 | | P.'s heart is stubborn (<i>kabad</i>) | |
| B. Hardening Pharaoh's heart: During the ten plagues: | | | |
| 7:22 (after 1st) | | P.'s heart was hardened (<i>hazaq</i>) | |
| 8:15 (after 2nd) | He hardened (<i>kabad</i>) his heart | | |
| 8:19 (after 3rd) | | P.'s heart was hardened (<i>hazaq</i>) | |
| 8:32 (after 4th) | Pharaoh hardened (<i>kabad</i>) | | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:7 (after 5th) | | heart of P. was stubborn (<i>kabad</i>) |
| 9:12 (after 6th) | | the LORD hard- ened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 9:34 (after 7th) | he sinned again and hardened (<i>hazaq</i>) his heart | |
| 9:35 | | heart of P. was hardened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 10:20 (after 8th) | | the LORD hard- ened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 10:27 (after 9th) | | the LORD hard- ened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 11:10 (summary) | | the LORD hard- ened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 13:15 (just before Passover) | P. was stubborn (<i>qashah</i>) | |
| 14:4 (before pursuit) | | "I will harden (<i>hazaq</i>) P.'s heart." |
| 14:8 | | the LORD hard- ened (<i>hazaq</i>) |
| 14:17 (at Red Sea) | | I will harden (<i>hazaq</i>) the hearts of the Egyptians. |

C. Conclusions about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart:

1. The very first reference to Pharaoh's not letting Israel go places the basic choice about and blame for hardness upon Pharaoh himself (3:19).

2. God promised that he would further harden Pharaoh's heart, since Pharaoh himself had started in this evil way (4:21).

3. After the first five plagues, either the statement is made the Pharaoh hardened his own heart, or the scripture is indefinite about who hardened it. Pharaoh himself made the first choices, and started his own troubles.

4. After the sixth plague, God hardened his heart. Probably Pharaoh sensed to some degree that he was being pushed by a power outside of himself. He was being shown

what might be the consequences of further determined hardness.

5. After the seventh plague, God again left the choice of response to Pharaoh. Pharaoh confesses that he has sinned (9:27). But he sinned yet more, and hardened his own heart again (9:34).

6. After all these opportunities to choose right had been spurned by Pharaoh, God finally stepped in and hardened his heart after the last three plagues. Because Pharaoh chose to go the way of disobedient hardness, God pushed him down his self-chosen route to the bitterest end of his folly.

Take heed, lest any one of YOU be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:13.

25. *In what way was Israel God's firstborn? (4:22)*

Israel was God's firstborn in that Israel was the most sacred of all peoples to God. The term *firstborn* is applied to the most honored son of a family, who would usually be the oldest. Pharaoh would have no difficulty in understanding the expression. The Pharaohs called themselves the "son of Ra" (the sun god) or some other deity. Pharaoh's oldest son (or heir) would be specially honored and even sacred in many respects. Israel bore a similar relationship with Yahweh to that which the Egyptian pharaohs claimed for themselves with their own deities.

Israel was not to be Yahweh's only son, but certainly his FIRSTBORN son (or people). Other nations would later be adopted.

Hosea 11:1 speaks of Israel as God's SON whom he called out of Egypt. Isa. 64:8 speaks of the LORD as Israel's father.

26. *What threat was directed at Pharaoh? (4:23)*

"Because you refuse to let Israel, my firstborn, go, behold, I will slay your son, your firstborn." Pharaoh's *firstborn* referred to here consisted of all the firstborn of all the people in Egypt. They were Pharaoh's firstborn because all the people of Egypt were regarded as belonging to Pharaoh. The

death of Egypt's firstborn would be a calamity that exceeded any calamity. See Ex. 11:5; 12:29.

27. *When and why did God try to kill Moses? (4:24)*

On the journey back to Egypt from Midian, while at an inn with his wife and two sons, Moses was smitten by God. Inns were simple tourist houses with shelter for animals as well as people. Compare Gen. 42:27. They must have been fairly common.

It appears from the scripture that Moses became deathly sick, so sick he could not rise from his cot nor do anything. This event occurred before they went as far from Midian as Mt. Sinai, probably at their first stop after leaving Midian.

The reason for this affliction was that Moses had neglected to circumcise one of his sons, possibly because his wife Zipporah had found the act repugnant to her. But God had long before told Abraham — the father and founder of the Hebrew covenant people — that circumcision was the token of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. "And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall but cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (Gen. 17:14).

Moses was to be the leader of the covenant people Israel. He could not be a leader if he had not first been a follower of God in his own house. We cannot lead where we will not go. This was a serious shortcoming in Moses, and, he nearly died because of it. This incident is a forcible example to God's servants now. They cannot expect to lead people to obey God in ways that they themselves are unwilling to obey.

Skeptical critics dislike Ex. 4:24-26. The 1969 *Broadman Bible Commentary*⁴ said that the passage has an almost demonic element about it, and that one is hardly justified in concluding that Yahweh actually attempted to take the life of Moses. The same source thinks that *feet* in 4:25 is a euphemism referring to the male organ, and that the whole passage is a distorted and ugly allusion to ancient marriage

⁴Vol. 1, p. 337. See also Martin Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

rituals. For our part we find the story edifying and helpful, although not particularly pleasant.

28. *How did Zipporah save her "bridegroom"?* (4:25-26)

She took a sharp flint, and circumcised her son, and cast the foreskin at "his" feet (presumably Moses' feet). By doing this she purchased Moses' life anew by the blood of her son, and she received him back as it were from the dead. Moses recovered.

The fact that she circumcised only her *son* (singular), although two sons were with them on the trip, suggests that the older son had already been circumcised. Zipporah's act in throwing the foreskin at his feet suggests her abhorrence of the rite. We are not informed how Zipporah was able to know that the failure to circumcise the son was the cause of Moses' affliction.

Some interpreters believe that the *his* in 4:25 refers to the son, rather than to Moses. The Revised Standard version translates the passage, "she touched *Moses'* (emphasis ours) feet with it" (the foreskin). Martin Noth, an extreme liberal, says that this insertion of the name *Moses* is "begging the question."⁵ We agree that the *his* should probably be left unaltered and uninterpreted, as it is in the Hebrew text. But, nonetheless, the *his* does surely seem to refer to Moses' feet, rather than to the son's. The pronoun *him* in 4:24 and 4:26 seems to refer to Moses in both places. Why should not the *his* in between (in 4:25) also refer to Moses? Also, what significance could there be in casting it at the son's feet?

A quite different view of this passage (4:25-26) is often set forth. This is the view that the *son* is the one called the bridegroom. Gesenius *Hebrew Lexicon* says that it is customary for [Jewish] women to call a son when he is circumcised, "Bridegroom"; and that those who apply the words [of Zipporah] to Moses and not to the child, seem to have made a great mistake. By this view the infant son is by the ceremony of circumcision married into God's covenant.

⁵Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

It appears to us that this view and practice results from a misinterpretation of this passage, and that the more obvious meaning of the text should not be altered by interpreting it by the practice. Judge the practice by the verse, and not the verse by the practice.

Nonetheless, there are problems in the interpretation of the passage. Why should Zipporah refer to Moses as a *bridegroom* when he had been married to her for nearly forty years? The common King James version renders the Hebrew word *hathan* as *husband*; but in all truth *hathan* means a bridegroom, or daughter's husband, and does not simply mean husband. The question is not easy to answer. Possibly Zipporah looked upon Moses' near-death and hoped-for recovery as a renewal of their marriage, and therefore called him bridegroom. To us this seems a more reasonable explanation, than any explanations as to how the son could be called anyone's bridegroom.

After this circumcision incident, Moses sent Zipporah and the two lads back to Midian, and he went alone on toward Egypt. Compare Ex. 18:2-3. It was over a year later when they were reunited.

29. *Where did Moses meet Aaron? (4:27)*

He met him at the mountain of God, that is, Horeb, or Sinai (3:1). God spoke to Aaron, directing him to a certain place at a certain time, as He did later to Philip (Acts 8:26). Moses had made quite a long trip (perhaps seventy miles) from the burning bush at Horeb, back to Midian, and back again to Horeb with his family. The meeting with Aaron would be a strong sign of divine favor to Moses (see 4:14).

30. *What did Moses tell Aaron about? (4:28)*

Two things: the words of God, and all the signs that God had commanded him to do. There is no indication that Moses performed the signs before Aaron; but he told him about them.

31. *What did Aaron do when the elders of Israel were gathered? (4:30)*

He spoke the words which Jehovah had spoken to Moses;

and he did the signs in the sight of the people. We hardly feel that Aaron himself actually did the signs (see 4:3-9). He probably announced that they would be done, and Moses did them. Note how prominent Aaron was as the spokesman here at the beginning of Moses' work of delivering Israel. Aaron's prominence later diminished.

32. *What was Israel's response to the news of deliverance?* (4:31)

They believed, and bowed their heads in worship. The people believed, as God had foretold they would (3:18), and not as Moses feared (4:1).

God twice gave encouragement to Moses as he began his great task: (1) Aaron met Moses, as God had predicted; (2) the people believed, as God had foretold.

On *visit*, see 3:16 and Gen. 50:25.

The Israelites believed when they first heard Moses. Their faith did not stand up in subsequent tests. But they started well, and God only gave them one test at a time. Each experience could lead into a harder test to follow, and to the opportunity for even greater victories of faith.

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

5 And afterward Mo-ses and Aar-on came, and said unto Pha-raoh, Thus saith Je-ho-vah, the God of Is-ra-el, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. (2) And Pha-raoh said, Who is Je-ho-vah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Is-ra-el go? I know not Je-ho-vah, and moreover I will not let Is-ra-el go. (3) And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Je-ho-vah our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. (4) And the king of E-gypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Mo-ses and Aar-on, loose the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. (5) And Pha-raoh said, Behold, the people of the land are now many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. (6) And the same day Pha-raoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their