



Exodus 4:1-28

MAKING EXCUSES

The primary mark—the hallmark—of the people of God is obedience to His word. The Lord looks for trust, loves to be trusted, reacts against the withholding of trust, and assures His people that the way of trust is the way of life. This fits in exceedingly well with the thrust of the whole episode of Moses’ call, for in response to the variety of stated needs, whether in Moses himself or in the task to which he was being sent, the Lord just offered Himself. He did not alter Moses’ self-awareness so that he felt competent. He did not undertake to change the circumstances or suggest that the task was, after all, easier than it looked. He did not even guarantee immediate success or urge Moses to “think positively” ... No, He offered nothing but that He Himself is the accompanying Lord—self-revealing, promise-making, victorious, transforming, superior to every foe, the creator, and the provider. The “call” really consists of nothing more than the Lord asking Moses, “Do you trust Me? Will you go simply trusting Me?” And, of course, the evidence of that trust will be obedience, the obedience that arises from and rests on faith. —J. Alec Motyer

God called Moses to deliver His people from Egypt. After 40 years of tending sheep in the desert, Moses was not too excited or interested in this call. His past failures still stung. His present life was settled. And the prospect of opposing Pharaoh, the most powerful man of that time, was, humanly speaking, foolish and fatal. So Moses begins to make excuses and to try to wriggle out of God’s will.

MOSES _____ AGAINST GOD’S WILL (4:1-17)

- A I am not the right person—You must want someone else (3:11)
- B I don’t have the right answers—I don’t know what to say (3:13)
- C I don’t have the right credibility—they won’t listen to me (4:1)
- B I don’t have the right ability—I don’t know how to speak (4:10)
- A I am not the right person—Please send someone else! (4:13)

Excuse #3: What if they don’t _____ me? (4:1)

God’s Answer: Here are three _____ for you (4:2-9).

1. Staff to Snake to Staff
2. Health to Leprosy to Health
3. Water to Blood

Excuse #4: I am not a man of _____ (4:10).

He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.

—Benjamin Franklin

Excuses enjoy the reputation of being universally condemned while being universally used... Excuses are self-serving explanations, or accounts, that aim to reduce personal responsibility...

—B. Schlenker, B. Pontari, A. Christopher
Social Psychology Review (2001)

Believe. Heb., *aman*, “to trust; to lean upon, build upon, rely upon.”

Because snakes symbolized power and life to the Egyptians, God was declaring to Moses that he would be able to overcome the powers of Egypt. —John Hannah

Sign. Heb., *oth*, “signal, banner.” It points beyond itself to something else. “A wonder astonishes; a sign instructs” (Motyer).

Moses did not have a scepter. He had a [shepherd’s] staff. That is leadership in the kingdom of God. —Tony Merida

God's Answer: I am the Creator of your _____ and the Giver of all gifts, abilities, and even inabilities (4:11-12).

Excuse #5: Oh, Lord, please send someone else! (4:13)

God's Answer: No, Moses, you must go! But I will send Aaron, your brother, to be your _____ to speak to the people (4:14-17).

MOSES _____ TO DO GOD'S WILL (4:18-28)

- Moses receives the blessing of his father-in-law, Jethro (4:18).
- The Lord reassures Moses before he leaves for Egypt (4:19).
- The Lord reinstructs Moses as he leaves for Egypt (4:21-23).
- Moses takes God's staff, along with his wife and sons (4:20).
- The Lord confronts Moses on the way to Egypt (4:24-26).

Problem:

Consequence:

Solution:

Reaction:

Result:

Application:

- The Lord provides Aaron as a friend and co-worker (4:27-28).

THREE KEY PRINCIPLES FROM EXODUS 4

1. True faith trusts God's Word not signs (Matt. 12:39; Jn. 2:23-25).
2. Disobedience to God can either be active or passive.
3. God often provides a companion to help us do His will.

Cherish the lowliest thought you choose of yourself, but unite it with the loftiest conception of God's All-Sufficiency. Self-depreciation may lead to the marring of a useful life. We must think soberly of ourselves, not too lowly, as not too extravagantly. The one talent must not be buried in the earth.

—F. B. Meyer

God was the revealer; Moses, the prophet; and Aaron, the public repeater, an arrangement not unlike that in the church involving God, the Scriptures..., and the preacher as the public repeater.

—Douglas K. Stuart

Exodus 4:24-26 is arguably the single most bizarre and baffling passage in all of the Hebrew Bible.

—Jonathan Kirsch

Yahweh's encounter with Moses was similar to the wrestling match of the Angel of Yahweh with Jacob (Gen. 32). Both appearances were sudden, personal, direct revelations of the divine presence in a hostile, wrestler's hold... Yahweh held Moses in a death grip, but He did not want to kill him.

—Ronald B. Allen

"You are a bridegroom of blood to me" indicate her revulsion and disgust with this rite of circumcision.

—Walter C. Kaiser

If Moses was to carry out the divine commission with success, he must first prove himself to be a faithful servant of Yahweh in his own house.

—Keil & Delitzsch

The God of the Bible is a God of words before deeds, a God of verbal revelation, who speaks and then acts to confirm what He has said.

—J. Alec Motyer