
Final Preparations for Moses' Return to Egypt

Exodus 4:18-31 (page 43 in the black Bibles)

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Proposition: In this passage, which ties up some loose ends before Moses actually goes to Pharaoh to deliver the LORD's message, the LORD provides everything that Moses needs to be successful in what the LORD has called him to do.

Moses Receives Jethro's Blessing (v. 18)

¹⁸Then Moses departed and returned to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Please, let me go, that I may return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see if they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

Jethro is always presented in a positive light in Exodus. (See also Exodus 18)

Moses Receives the Command to Go Back to Egypt (vv. 19-20)

The Command

¹⁹Now the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt,

The Timing

for all the men who were seeking your life are dead."

The Obedient Response

²⁰So Moses took his wife and his sons and mounted them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt.

Gershom – Ex. 2:22; 18:3; 1 Chr. 23:15-16

Eliezer – Ex. 18:4; 1 Chr. 23:15, 17

The Reassuring Symbol of Yahweh's Presence & Power

Moses also took the staff of God in his hand.

Psalms 23:4 "Your rod and Your staff they comfort me."

The Clarifying Call (vv. 21-23)

Exhortation to do what the LORD has commanded (21a)

²¹The LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power;

“God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” (Hudson Taylor)

Understanding Pharaoh’s response (21b)

but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.

“Three times Yahweh declares that He will harden Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 14:4). Six times Yahweh actually hardens Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:8). Seven times the hardening is expressed as a divine passive with Yahweh as the implied subject, i.e., Pharaoh’s heart was hardened by Yahweh (7:13, 14, 22; 8:19; 9:7, 35; 14:5). Three times we are told that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34).” (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/the-hardening-of-pharaohs-heart/>)

The Apostle Paul uses Pharaoh in his explanation of God’s sovereignty in election in Romans 9:14-24.

Delivering God’s word to Pharaoh (22-23a)

²²“Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Israel is My son, My firstborn. ²³“So I said to you, ‘Let My son go that he may serve Me’;

Firstborn Son – This title emphasizes the special relationship between Yahweh and Israel. It also stresses the privileges, blessings and responsibilities this status carries. The LORD confronts Pharaoh with how he has been treating His firstborn son and pronounces severe judgment for his unwillingness to let His son go and serve/worship Him.

Psalm 89:27 (vv. 24-29) David is described as God’s firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.”

Hosea 11:1 “When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son.”

Matthew 2:14-15 “So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet; “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

The consequences of disobedience (22b)

but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.””””

Fulfilled in as the result of the final plague that causes Pharaoh to release Israel from slavery. Exodus 11:5; 12:29; 13:15

The LORD Disciplines Those He Loves (vv. 24-26)

²⁴Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death.

²⁵Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son’s foreskin and threw it at Moses’ (lit. his) feet, and she said, “You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me.”

²⁶So He let him alone. At that time she said, “You are a bridegroom of blood”—because of the circumcision.

Abrahamic Covenant – Genesis 17:9-14, 23-27

“But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” (Gen. 17:14)

See also Joshua 5:1-9, where the sons of Israel are circumcised after they had crossed the Jordan River.

Moses and Aaron Reunited (vv. 27-31)**In Midian (vv. 27-28)**

²⁷Now the LORD said to Aaron, “Go to meet Moses in the wilderness.” So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. ²⁸Moses told

Aaron all the words of the LORD with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him to do.

In Egypt (v. 29-31)**Moses & Aaron proclaim God’s message with God’s signs (29-30)**

²⁹Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; ³⁰and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses.

He then performed the signs in the sight of the people.

The people respond (v. 30)

³¹So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped.

Their initial response is faith expressed in worship. Their faith will be tested.
(1 Peter 1:6-8; 4:12-13)

Application:

God will always supply all that is needed to do what He is calling us to do.

God's people must not neglect neither the means of grace (Word of God, prayer, the Church which is Body of Christ), nor the signs of grace (the Lord's Supper, baptism and church membership).

Hebrews 2:1 "Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it."