

# Exodus

## Chapter 3

## Burning Concerns

22.01.2006

Exodus 2 has brought us to the point where we are waiting to see what God would do to fix up the problems of His people, who have been suffering in Egyptian slavery for a few generations. A new Pharaoh... people praying... the climate was now right for someone to go in God's name to bring about an end to the injustice.

But how would anyone know if God had really sent someone? Moses felt that problem acutely when God appeared in an unusual way and spoke to him. His burning concerns included "how will anyone believe him?"

People might say it was a mirage. Moses would have been used to mirages in the desert, most of them of cool water, maybe the waters of the Nile, in which he had swum or sailed for 40 years. But this was different. It was a burning bush. Yet the burning bush did not burn. It intrigued him, and mirages do not speak!

*"'Moses Moses!' and he said, 'Here I am.' 'Come no closer!' God said. 'Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God."*

God told Moses to go back to Egypt to free His people. God chose this runaway murderer, who had tried and failed and for 40 years had hidden in Midian. Even if the Egyptians did not arrest and kill him, how could he convince his people to follow him? They had rejected him before, and he was no piper.

*"Moses said to God 'If I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what will I say to them?' God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. Thus you will say to the Israelites: 'I AM... has sent me to you.'"*

So now he could go back to Egypt, and if not killed, he could tell the Israelites that I AM

(which is English for Yahweh or Jehovah) has spoken to him, giving him the authority to rescue them from slavery.

But what if simply knowing God's name wouldn't convince them? "I want something more concrete, please God, something that will help them believe." In chapter 4, Moses asks for a few signs, which may help the Hebrews believe that God had sent him.

But even when God gave him two to use, Moses stubbornly stalled again. He thought God obviously had the wrong person, because Moses had a speech impediment. God grew angry with him, for Moses was trying to weasel his way out.

You do not ever try to get out of doing what you should, do you? You would not explore every crack for a loophole, would you? You would never think someone else can do a much better job than you, would you?

Moses could stall no more. He went back, and was not arrested.

But did they believe him? Just as God had said, the Israelites did believe when they heard God's name and saw the miracles of turning his rod into a snake and of his hand getting leprosy and then being clean again. and Moses' brother Aaron was given the task of speaking for Moses to overcome the impediment.

They were ready to be delivered, because God intervened in human history, and revealed Himself and His purposes to a person, who was being equipped to lead them.

So does that mean that when someone speaks for God, if a miracle occurs, everyone will be forced to listen? NO.

For when Moses did exactly the same things in front of Pharaoh, Pharaoh did not believe him at all. He had never heard of Yahweh, and his court magicians could do a similar trick. Just because a miracle occurs does not mean that people will listen more or believe more.

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Remember what happened with Jesus? Here was God come on earth, not just a prophet who had heard God. What happened when he said I have come from God? They tried to kill him. In John 10, the Jews were talking with Jesus, wanting to know if he was really the Christ. In verse 24 they said *“How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.”* Jesus answered, *‘I have told you, but you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me, but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep.’*

The Jews heard him many times. They saw his miracles, yet they had him killed.

So often we become like Moses. We want more proof that will convince others that we have God’s good news of salvation. We find it hard to accept that God will change the hearts of people to believe, so we rely on what has worked in the past, or on wanting the miraculous to convict people, or on seeing special signs that will convince us that someone will believe.

I wonder how often God grieves over our lack of faith. Do we trust that His word, his news of Jesus is His power for salvation? Do we trust Him to change people’s hearts to believe or not?

Moses was given a brilliant lesson. God said trust me, and they will believe. He pushed God to the limit, because he was not sure if people would believe. Then God showed him that the very same things Moses wanted led the Israelites to believe, while Pharaoh refused to believe.

The important thing is not the way we tell others. It is not any miracle which may or may not accompany what we say. The important thing is for God to soften people’s hearts so that they will believe.

That is why I need your prayer support as much as you need mine. Each week I am telling people of the good news of Jesus. I use as much skill as I can to present the truth. However, not everyone responds in faith. We need to keep on praying that God will change the hearts of many people

to believe.

There is almost nothing like the thrill of seeing someone come into God’s family while you are talking. I want more and more to enjoy this. So I am praying for God to change the hearts of those you chat with as well.

Have confidence in God. His word is powerful, because His Spirit brings it alive in people’s hearts. Your colleagues, friends and family need your prayer, and need your faithful actions, and need you to remind them of the good news.

I am praying that this week, that you have an opportunity to chat about Jesus to at least one person. Trust God to work in His way.