

## Exodus 4

Verses 1 - 5

**Then Moses said, “What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’<sup>2</sup> The Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” And he said, “A staff.”<sup>3</sup> Then He said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.<sup>4</sup> But the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand and grasp *it* by its tail”—so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”**

### **What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say?**

\*\*This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> of 3 objections\*\*

God had already assured him that the leaders of Israel would believe him

See Exodus 3:18

### **So he threw his staff on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it**

The fact that Moses fled tells us this was not a common trick performed by the Egyptian magicians because Moses would have been familiar with it

Unless this magic trick was developed by the magicians in the last 40 years while Moses was in Midian raising a family

### **That they may believe that the Lord has appeared to you**

Even though God had promised that the leaders would believe in Moses, He gives this miracle to Moses to perform before the elders

God may have done this more for Moses than the leaders

In either case, this is the 1st of 3 miracles that God will give to Moses

Verses 6 - 9

**<sup>6</sup> The Lord furthermore said to him, “Now put your hand into your bosom.” So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. <sup>7</sup> Then He said, “Put your hand into your bosom again.” So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like *the rest of his flesh*. <sup>8</sup> If they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign. <sup>9</sup> But if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”**

**So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow**

When God performed these signs they were miracles

But later when the Egyptian magicians duplicate these signs we know it had to be some kind of illusion that made it look real

**<sup>8</sup> If they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign**

This 2nd miracle, like the first, was given that “they” might believe

However, these signs were given to Moses because he was skeptical that the elders would believe that God had appeared to him

**But if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say**

If the elders didn't believe the first two signs, do you think this 3<sup>rd</sup> one would do the trick?

Miracles cannot create faith in those who have no faith

See John 12:37

But miracles can strengthen those who do believe but are weak in their faith

See John 12:42 - 43

Verses 10 - 13

**<sup>10</sup> Then Moses said to the Lord, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” <sup>11</sup> The Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes *him* mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? <sup>12</sup> Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.” But he said, “Please, Lord, now send *the message* by whomever You will.”**

**For I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.**

**\*\*This is the 3rd of 3 objections\*\***

Is this a true statement from Moses that he was slow of speech and slow of tongue?

See Acts 7:22

**The Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Is it not I, the Lord?**

The reluctance of Moses was a matter of trust

Did he trust God to help him?

Having said that, not everyone has the gift of public speaking

We are one body with many members

See 1 Cor. 12:27-31

**Now then go, and I, will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to say**

Forty years earlier, Moses saw himself as the champion of Israel

By his own personal strength he could deliver them

Now he had to rely on God and his power

This is very similar to what Jesus promised the apostles

See Matthew 10:19-20

Verses 14-17

**14 Then the anger of the Lord burned against Moses, and He said, “Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. 16 Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him. 17 You shall take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs.”**

### **Then the anger of the Lord burned against Moses**

God had good reason to be angry with Moses

This was a direct, face to face, discussion with God

This is not the same as feeling led to do God's will

### **Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite?**

Moses was unwilling to be the spokesman so God gave him an out

But this was not what God wanted and Aaron will fail in his role as a leader in a major way when Moses receives the two tablets from God.

See Exodus 32:25

We learned in Exodus 2:1 that the parents of Moses were from the tribe of Levi

### **He shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him**

God would give a message to Moses and he would convey it to Aaron who would then tell it to the people

Despite the fact that God was angry with Moses He did listen to him and provided someone to help in this mission

And He still left Moses in the more honorable leadership role

Verses 18 - 20

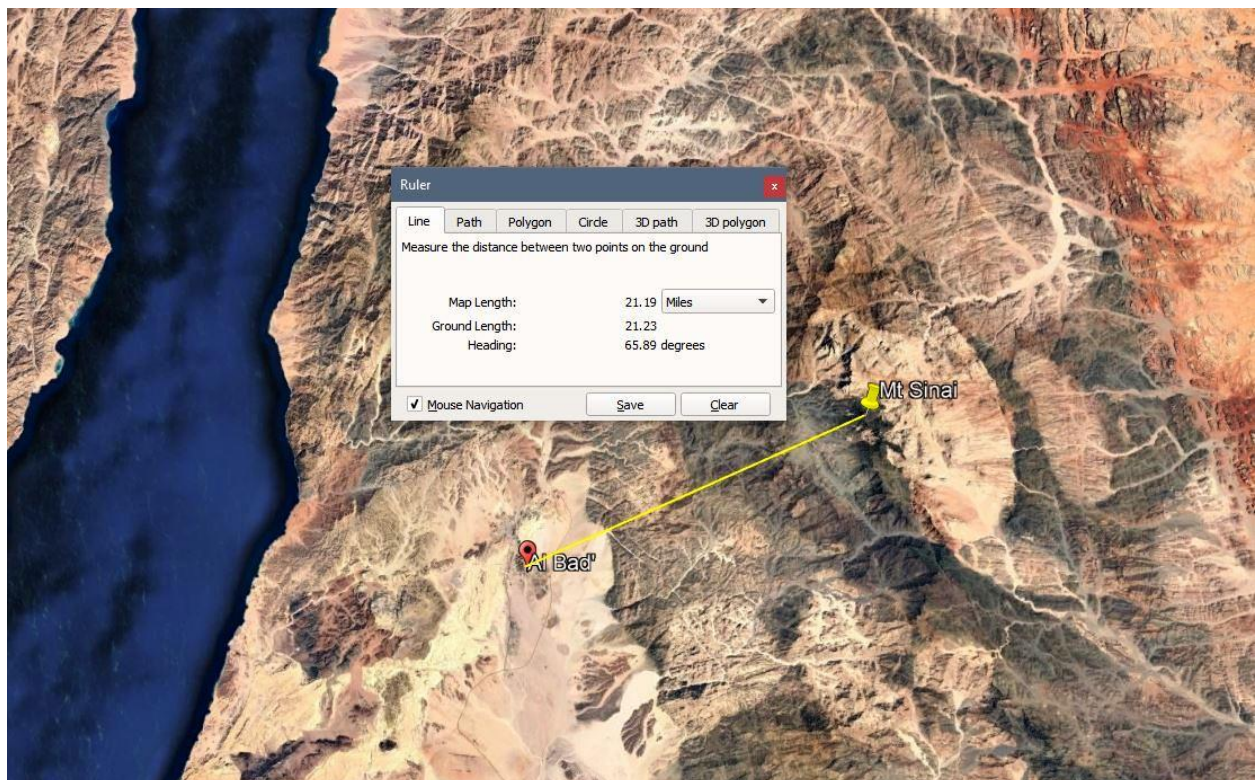
**Then Moses departed and returned to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, “Please, let me go, that I may return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see if they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.” Now the Lord said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead. <sup>20</sup> So Moses took his wife and his sons and mounted them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand.**

**Then Moses departed and returned to Jethro his father-in-law**

Moses had led the flock to the far side of the wilderness

Now he returns to Jethro at Midian

See map 405      Thanks to Google Earth



From Midian to Mount Horeb is about 20 miles as the crow flies.

**Please, let me go, that I may return to my brethren who are in Egypt**

Through marriage to Zipporah, Moses had become a member of the clan

Tribal law may have required his permission to leave

Plus, he was an employee of Jethro

**Now the Lord said to Moses in Midian, Go back to Egypt**

Moses may have delayed his return to Egypt so God reminds him to get going

**<sup>20</sup> So Moses took his wife and his sons and mounted them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand.**

This is the first mention of any son except Gershom

But we learn the name of the other son, Eliezer, in Exodus 18:4

Verses 21 - 23

**<sup>21</sup> The 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; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. <sup>22</sup> Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Israel is my son, my firstborn. <sup>23</sup> So I said to you, ‘Let My son go that he may serve me’; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.**

**When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power**

We can assume God is referring to the 3 signs discussed in chapter 3

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

We will discuss the subject of free will in chapter 9 when we have more information

**Thus says the Lord, “Israel is my son, my firstborn**

Physical Israel was God’s firstborn

But this hints that there will be another child…….A spiritual Israel

**But you have refused to let him go**

**Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn**

This will happen in the 10<sup>th</sup> and final plague

The king will pay a high price for willfully disobeying the Lord

Verses 24-26

**<sup>24</sup> Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. <sup>25</sup> Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son’s foreskin and threw it at Moses’ feet, and she said, “You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me.” <sup>26</sup> So He let him alone. At that time she said, “*You are a bridegroom of blood*”— because of the circumcision.**

**At the lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death**

On their way from Midian to Egypt God was ready to kill Moses

Perhaps Moses became deathly sick and was incapacitated

This would explain why Zipporah took the lead in performing the circumcision

**Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son’s foreskin**

This was the sign and seal of the Jewish covenant

For any Hebrew to neglect this, especially the leader and deliverer of the nation, was something that had to be addressed immediately

Seeing that it would cost her the life of her husband, she did not delay

**You are a bridegroom of blood—because of the circumcision.**

It seems that circumcision was repugnant to Zipporah, but we are not told why.

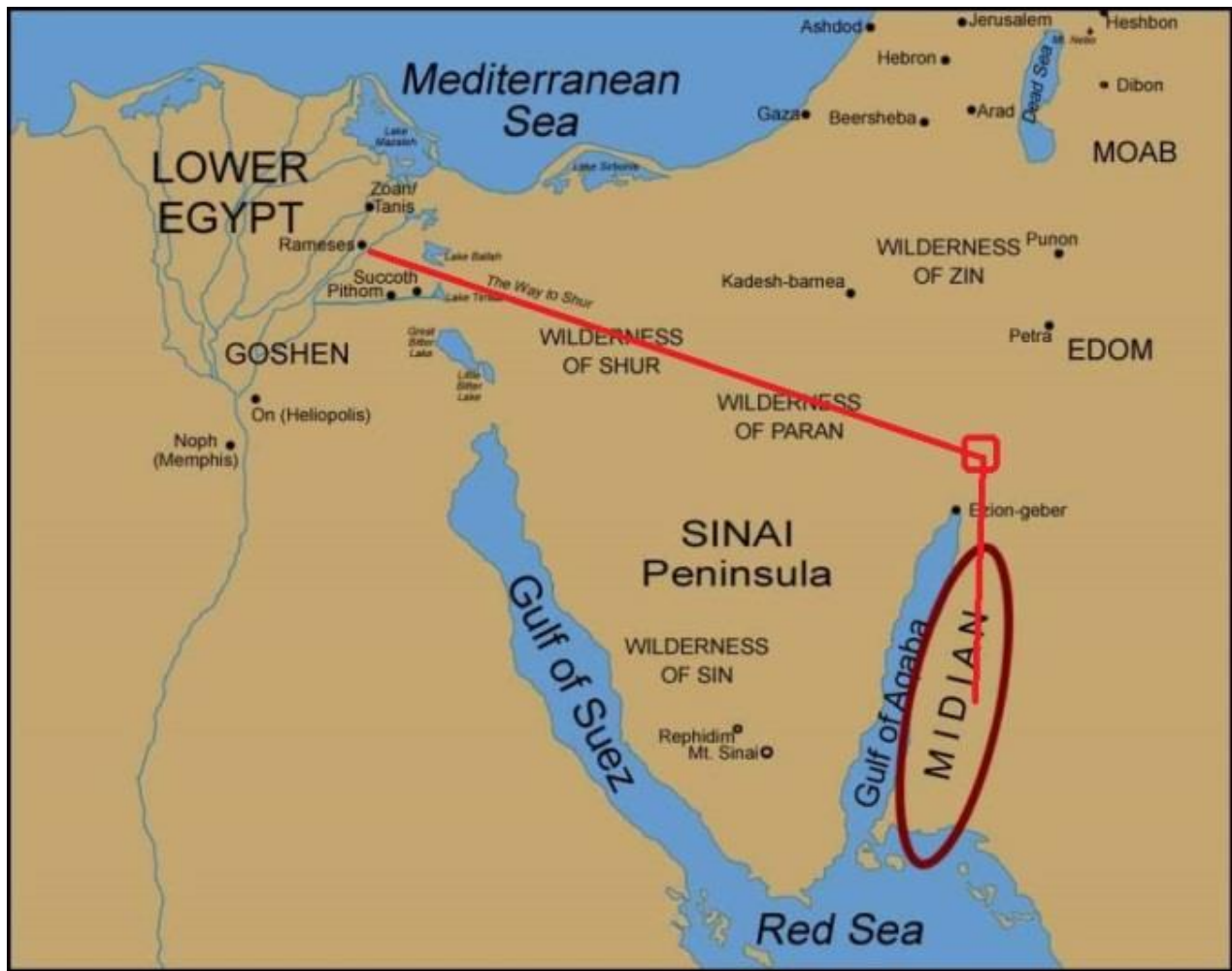
**So He let him alone**

As soon as the circumcision was complete, God backed away and left Moses alone

It was probably here at the lodging place that Zipporah and Moses decided it would be better for her and the children to head back to Midian

The 300 mile trip to Egypt would have been hard on the boys in their condition

See Map 410 Midian to Egypt





About a year later, after the Exodus had already taken place, Jethro brought Zipporah and the kids back to Moses

See Exodus 18:2-3

Since Moses was camped close to Sinai, the trip from Midian was only about 20 miles

Verses 27- 31

**<sup>27</sup> Now 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. <sup>28</sup> Moses 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*. <sup>29</sup> Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; <sup>30</sup> and Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. <sup>31</sup> So 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.**

**Go meet Moses in the wilderness. So he met him at the mountain of God**

Where did Aaron come from?

Had he leave Egypt, fearing retribution, after his brother rebelled against the king

How about Miriam?

**<sup>28</sup> Moses 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*.**

Moses updates his brother about what had taken place at Mount Horeb

**<sup>29</sup> Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; <sup>30</sup> and Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses.**

This is what God had told Moses to do back in Exodus 3:16

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

God had promised Moses that the elders would believe if he gave them the following message:

1. I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt
2. I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to a land flowing with milk and honey

But Moses performed the signs before the elders could accept or reject the message based solely on the message

**<sup>31</sup> So 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.**

It seems the message is what really persuaded the elders just as the Lord had said.

So who needed the miracles; Moses or the elders?