

Exodus 4:1–9

- 1 Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The LORD has not appeared to you.’ ”
- 2 So the LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A rod.”
- 3 And He said, “Cast it on the ground.” So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.
- 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail” (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand),
- 5 “that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”
- 6 Furthermore the LORD said to him, “Now put your hand in your bosom.” And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow.
- 7 And He said, “Put your hand in your bosom again.” So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh.
- 8 “Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign.
- 9 And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.”

Our Gift for Jesus, Part 3 **Exodus 4:1-9**

INTRO:

The person, who is always the most difficult to give to, is the person who has everything. In our Christmas series this year, we are talking about giving to the Lord. He does have everything. He is self-existent and totally self-sufficient. He does not need anything or anyone. What to you give the Lord for Christmas? We decided that the only appropriate gift is the gift described in **Romans 12:1**. ***“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable act of worship.”*** We are talking about the gift of ourselves as a living sacrifice to the Lord.

We have listened in on the LORD's conversation with Moses, when God called to do the work God created him to do. Moses was not thrilled. In fact, he was terrified. His first problem was he thought he was nobody and because of this, could not be used of God. God said, *"No, I will be with you!"* Nobody plus God is somebody. Next, Moses claimed he didn't know the LORD well enough to serve Him. God replied with a revelation of Himself.

We come now to Moses' third objection. ***"Then Moses answered, 'But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, The Lord did not appear to you.'"***

I. Moses Objects (v. 1)

II. God Overrules (v. 2-9)

I. Moses Objects (v. 1)

A. As he listened to the LORD's Self-revelation and commanded response to the revelation another doubt crept into Moses' mind. So, as soon as the LORD stops speaking, *Moses objects* again.

"Then Moses answered, 'But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, The Lord did not appear to you.'"

B. *"LORD, you said the leaders would believe me, but what if they don't?"* This was Moses' worst case scenario. People who are chronic worriers are very talented in crafting worse case scenarios. I came up a worst case scenario when driving Rachel to work one day and she was afraid she would be late. It went from Rachel being late to the world being destroyed in a nuclear war.

C. It looked as if Moses practiced worst case scenarios also at *Desert Theological Seminary*. He came up with one on the spot. *"I'll fail, Lord, because the leaders won't listen to me."* We can understand a little where this fear might have come from. Remember in **Acts 7:25**, in Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin, we learn about Moses' first attempt at convincing the Jewish leaders that he was supposed to be their deliverer.

"[Moses] supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by His hand, but they did not understand."

II. God Overrules (v. 2-9)

A. We should marvel at God's patience. God already promised Moses the leaders would listen to him. What did Moses do by positing his worst case scenario? Moses questioned God's ability to do what He had promised to do (**v.18**). This was a direct attack on God's ability and truthfulness. Think about what the LORD could have done. **[1]** The Lord could have given Moses a thorough tongue lashing. *"You dummy, weren't you listening? I just promised you that they would listen to you. If you would pay attention you wouldn't make such dumb excuses."* **[2]** Or, He could have let

Moses run around like an ox for seven years like He did King Nebuchadnezzar to see if that would help him obey. God didn't. Instead, He gave Moses three miracles to take with him as a security blanket.

B. What did the LORD do? God gave Moses the miracle of the rod.

vs.2-5 *“The LORD said to him, ‘What is that in your hand?’ He said, ‘A staff.’ And He said, ‘Throw it on the ground.’ So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. But the LORD said to Moses, ‘Put out your hand and catch it by the tail’—so he put 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.”*

God answers Moses' question with a question. *“What's that in your hand?”* The answer is significant.

1. That rod was only a shepherd's crook. It was a tool of his trade as a shepherd. Moses had no idea what God was going to do with that stick the day he picked it out in the Shepherd's Depot. It was a normal, everyday Shepherd's crook. There was nothing special about the stick. It was just available and in his hand.

2. Look what God asked Moses to do with this rod. *“Throw it on the ground.”* The very instant the rod hit the dust, it became a live, slithering, hissing snake. We are not told what kind of snake, but we know that it was a scary one, because even a veteran shepherd, like Moses, ran away from it. Now God asked Moses to do something really strange. *‘Put out your hand and catch it by the tail.’* Moses had learned how to handle dangerous snakes in his time as a shepherd. He knew catching a snake by the tail was not advised. Give Moses credit, he did exactly as God asked and no sooner did he grasp the scaly tail than it became the smooth wood of his staff again.

3. The significance of this didn't dawn on Moses back then. Yet, there is a principle here. When God wants to do something wonderful, He often asks us to give what we have to Him first.

4. Remember the widow of Zarephath and Elijah? What was in her hand? She had a little flour and a little oil. God asked she give a cake to Elijah first, and then God provided for her, her son, and Elijah through the rest of the famine. Think back to the marriage supper in Cana of Galilee. What did they lack? Wine. What did they have at hand? Water and water pots. It was until the jugs were filled with water that Jesus turned the water into wine. How about the feeding of the five thousand? There was a boy who had a lunch in his hand. He took five loaves and two fishes and gave them to Jesus and the multitude ate his lunch with him and had a lot left over. Can you imagine the story the boy told when he got home?!

5. The principle is true for Moses also. When Moses threw the stick down, it was his lifeless stick. It became a snake. When Moses picked it up, it became his

same stick, but something else happened. That rod became a powerful tool in the LORD's hand. Let me just give you a glimpse of what it became. When Moses finally gave in to the LORD, listen to what the LORD said to him in **Exodus 4:17**.

“And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.”

Again in **verse 20** we read,

“So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.”

In **Exodus 7** we learn that it is this simple piece of wood God uses to turn the Nile to blood. In **Exodus 14:16** this staff is in the spot light.

“Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.”

Once more in **Exodus 17:5-6** we read,

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.’”

When the Children of Israel had to do battle with the Amalekites, what gave them the victory? **Exodus 17:9** reads,

“So Moses said to Joshua, ‘Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.’”

A pretty remarkable piece of wood wouldn't you say? Yet, it was an ordinary shepherd's crook. It only became extraordinary when it was given to the LORD for His use.

C. The second Miracle was the leprosy on Moses' hand. This miracle would surely make the leaders take notice. Especially when he put it back in his bosom and bringing it out healed.

D. Finally, there was the miracle of turning the water to blood.

E. What did these signs mean to Moses? They meant God understood Moses was afraid. He wanted Moses to know, if he gave the LORD his life God would do wonders through him. God said, in effect, *“Give me your hands and I will do the impossible with them. Just trust me and obey me and I will do great things through you.”*

God is saying the very same thing to each of us. Right now, He is asking us, *“What is that in your hand?”* What is your life? I don't want the special. I want you the way you are that I may do wonderful things through you.

*If there ever were dreams that were lofty and noble
They were my dreams at the start
And the hopes for life's best were the that I harbored,
Down deep in my heart.*

*But my dreams turned to ashes, my castles all crumbled
My fortunes turned to loss
So, I wrapped it all in the rags of my life,
And I laid them at that old cross*

*And He did something beautiful, something good
All my confusions, He understood
All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife
But He made something really beautiful of my life.*

-Gloria Gather

Hymn #519 *Something Beautiful*