

**[Wednesday, March 9, 2016] Exodus Series, Exodus chapter 4, versus 24-31 – Craig Thurman**

Moses did not reveal to his father-in-law, Jethro, the details for his desire to return to Egypt.

*Ex 18:1 When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt ...*

The LORD comforted Moses concerning those who had previously sought his life for killing the Egyptian. (4.19)

Moses is noted to have taken *the rod of God*. (4.20) After some more investigation it does appear that both Moses and Aaron had rods with which the LORD worked his miracles. More on that in chapter 5.

We read how that the LORD will harden Pharaoh's heart. (4.21) Here we spent the rest of our study on this very important matter. This runs parallel to the doctrine of God's election of grace. This is called the doctrine of eternal reprobation. Like the doctrine of election, the doctrine of eternal reprobation will manifest itself in response to the works of God. Without grace man in his fallen state hardens against all that the LORD will do. The goodness of God should have lead all to repentance, but the fallen nature of man would not have it so.

*Ro 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

Many professing believers recoil and question such a truth. In order to be blessed with stronger faith and firmer assurance we must change our minds to agree with the Word of God.

*Ro 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

*Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind ...*

*1Pe 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ ...*

Lay aside every thought and imagination which contradicts the Word of God and receive the glorious thoughts and truths of God.

*2Co 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ...*

We have a very practical application that we can make of the remaining part of this chapter. We entertain a very serious matter in the life of Moses which addresses a very serious matter for all who have professed a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. There are Christians whose lives, like Moses, are situated very precariously contrary to the *commandments* of God's Word. This proved to be a matter of life and death for Moses. Such is no less serious for any child of God who will disregard the terms of His covenant.

God has a claim upon our lives. Being that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us so that we might live, He has an especial right over us to require obedience to all the terms of the covenant into which He has brought us. Any good, diligent, and loving parent would rightly expect a similar obedience of every child of their house as long as they lived and remained there. And so we give such thought to this text before us today.

24 ¶ *And it came to pass by the way* <sup>בַּדֶּרֶךְ</sup> *in the inn,* <sup>בַּמְּלוּן</sup> *that the LORD met him, and*  
*by the lodging*

*in the inn,* <sup>בַּמְּלוּן</sup>, noun masc, sing. w/pref. <sup>בְּ</sup>, root <sup>מָלַן</sup>; KJV, *inn, lodging place.*

*met him,* <sup>וַיִּפְגְּשֵׁהוּ</sup>, Qal fut, 3ps w/suff. 3ps, root <sup>פָּגַשׁ</sup>; to confront, but always translated with the English *meet*. (cf. 27); Davidson's Hebrew Lexicon defines this as '*to fall upon in a hostile sense; to light upon.*'

It seems better to say that in every instance where this word is found that there is always *a pretext of hostility*. (All of those places are: Ge 32.17; 33.8; Ex.4.27; 1Sa. 25.20; 2Sa. 2.13; Job 5.14; Ps. 85.10; Pr. 17.12; 22.2; 29.13; Is.34.14; Jer. 41.6; Hos.13.8)

*sought to kill him.*

*to kill him*, הִמִּיתוּ, Hiphil (causative active) infinitive, w/suff. 3psm; root מוּת; Qal preterite, Ex.4.19, *all the men are dead*; 7.21, the fish that was in the river **died**, *et al.*; in Hiphil infinitive, *to slay or to kill*;

The gravity of the moment is not that Moses would die, but that the LORD Himself was about to *kill* him, that is, be the very *active cause of his dying*.

Moses received his commission and prepared to enter into the work of God, but he was not qualified for it. Receiving a commission and being qualified for it are two issues that need to be addressed.

So now, what is Moses' trouble. Why was the LORD seeking to kill him?

### צוֹר

25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast a flint

*it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.*

*a stone*, צוֹר, noun, masc., sing. of צוֹר; only other place is Ez.3.9, *As an adamant harder than flint.*

*and cast at*, וַתִּגַּע, Hiphil (causative active) fut., 3psf of נָגַע; Hiphil preterite, *to strike, to reach up, to come, draw near, bring down*; Hiphil infinitive, *to come*; Hiphil future, *to cast, bring, reach, come nigh, draw near, laid, touch*; Hiphil participle, *to reach to join, to come*; In Qal it is to touch. Zipporah caused it to touch his feet, so obviously she cast it there.

The ordinance of circumcision was initiated four centuries earlier when it was given to Abraham. (cf. Ge. 17) The covenant was as binding upon Israel then as it was now in his day. Every male born in the houses of Israel, and every stranger bought with money which was not of the seed of Abraham were to have this mark upon their flesh. Non-compliance resulted in that soul being cut from Israel because he had broken the LORD's covenant. This mark kept the people set apart to the LORD.

Moses had a son, whether it was Gershom or Eliezer we do not know, that was not circumcised. As a father in Israel, Moses had failed in his son to keep covenant with God, and the LORD moved to kill him for it. But Zipporah, perhaps because Moses was in such a bad state and could not do so himself, performed this task. (Abraham performed this rite himself upon his house. [Ge.17.23, 26,27; 21.4) At this Moses is released to begin his public service for the LORD to Israel, beginning in Egypt.

By way of application today, no one who has been brought to faith in Christ and has thought to enter into any service about the things of His N.T. church should think that they are fit for that service without having complied with that first commandment upon their lives to be baptized. What Moses was suffering runs directly parallel with this thought concerning a N.T. believer trying to serve the Lord without obeying the first covenant commandment.

There are Christians who disagree with me on this issue. For example, they think that love negates obedience. While love is a primary concern it is love which moves one to baptism.

*Mt 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and **have omitted the weightier matters of the law**, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, **and not to leave the other undone.***

It is a contradiction to be called a disciple and not follow Christ according to His Word.

*Lu 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

Consider the importance that our Lord Jesus Christ placed upon the baptism of John. He went to John, in a remote place, to receive his baptism. Everyone went out to him. Our Lord, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lamb of God, Savior of men; the Messiah was baptized by a who man dressed in camel's hair clothing, girded with a leather girdle, who ate locusts and wild honey. Why? Because God commanded it as a public show of faith in His own. All four gospels record the baptism of our Lord.

To this we add that Jesus Christ, the Son of God come in the flesh, did not begin His public ministry until *after* He had received biblical baptism at God's authority, John the Baptist. Since it was so for Him, how can it be any different for those that follow Him? The first four chapters of the gospel of Matthew leads us to conclude in Christ that baptism precedes service. In chapter one we have the details of our Lord's genealogy and His purpose for coming. In chapter two there are the details surrounding his birth, His descent as a baby into Egypt and back. In chapter three we have the beginning of John Baptist's ministry up to the baptism of our Lord. Here, immediately after His baptism the Spirit of God publicly descended upon Him and a voice from heaven acknowledged Him as the Beloved Son of God. And then in chapter four we read of the 40 days and nights of testing that our Lord endured, after which He chose the twelve apostles and began his public ministry.

Baptism is a willing and public declaration of one's identity with Christ. It is also a preparatory act for identification with His people, the N.T. church, and His work in it. Every child of God should move from faith in Christ to obedience by baptism, to membership in one of His N.T. churches, and to faithful, spiritual service.

וַיֵּרָךְ מִלְּפָנָיו

חַתָּן דָּמִים

*26 So he [the LORD] let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because  
And He desisted from him*

*of the circumcision.*

*So he let ... go, וַיִּרְךָ, Qal future, 3psm of רָכַח, KJV, to abate, become weak, faint, consume; J. P. Green's Interlinear Bible, to desist, 'And He desisted from him ...'*

*husband, חָתָן, noun, masc., sing. of חָתָן, evidently this is translated in light of the context; KJV, father-in-law, son-in-law; husband.*

*bloody, דָּמָיִם, noun, masc., pl of דָּם, see אָדָם, adam, meaning red.*

Further proof that circumcision marked out or identified a people to the LORD: considering that it is in Genesis chapter 17 where both the names of Abram and Sarai are changed to Abraham and Sarah, (v.5, 15) and that Isaac, the promised seed, was also given his name at this time. (v.19) A breach in the covenant resulted in being cut off *from his people*. (Gen.17.14)

In a similar manner, the Lord commanded baptism to all that have come to faith in Christ. By baptism the believer becomes publically identified with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

*Ro 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

I want to offer some distinctions and parallels between circumcision and baptism.

### **Two Distinctions between Circumcision and Baptism:**

- Children were not circumcised based on the faith of their parents but because of the imperative of the covenant of the Lord. But faith in the candidate is a requisite for all who will receive baptism.
- While there is an explicit commandment and examples enough showing the circumcision of the seed of Abraham from infancy,

there is not a single commandment or example in Scripture, explicit or implicit, showing the baptism of any child.

#### **Four Parallels**

- Proper executors: the house of Israel; the house of God
- Proper candidates: a son being identified with the seed of Abraham; a son identifying with the seed of Christ.
- Proper mode for entering into covenant: circumcision (Ge.17); baptism (Acts 8.36-39; Ro.6.4, 5)
- Proper purpose: preparation for service & receipt of the benefits of the covenant (circumcision, Gen.17.12-14; 34.22; Gen.17.12-14; 34.22-24; Ex.12.48, 49; Nu.15.15, 29, 30; Jos.5.9; baptism, Mt. 3.2)

(cf. the study, *Circumcision, Baptism, and the Kingdom of God*, p.29)

Though Zipporah does comply, she apparently takes offense with the rite of circumcision. Both her reaction – casting it to his feet, and her words – *'Surely a bloody husband art thou to me,'* lead me to this conclusion. And many take offense, not so much when one makes a profession of faith in Christ, but when they submit themselves to the ordinance of baptism.

At this time Moses apparently sent Zipporah and his sons back to Jethro. (Ex.18.1-5) Nonetheless the issue is settled and Moses may move forward in his commission. And like this, those who profess faith in Christ can do the same. This is my position, and I think you will understand what I say. Baptism is not the door to the church, but it opens the door to it. (Mk.1.4-8; Acts 3.41)

By Scripture it is my understanding that not only are its members dismissed from the church by her decision, but they are received into her membership the same way. Think with me about how this Scripture reads:

*Ac 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

This does not say that all of those that were baptized were added to the Jerusalem church membership. It only reads, that *there were added unto them about three thousand souls*. This forces us to conclude that there were more than 3000 souls baptized on that day.

For the children of Israel, circumcision was the external witness which initiated them to *save their lives* life for God, and baptism is the external witness which initiates us to *save our lives* for Christ. Neither was an end. It was a beginning. There was far more to being a part of Israel than being circumcised, and there is far more to becoming a part of the family of God than baptism. Both are *initiatory rites* from which we move into service.

As wonderful as it was when we were brought to faith in Christ that was not all that there was to salvation. As great as it was that we were obedient to the command of God to be baptized upon our profession of faith in Christ, that didn't mark the end of our Christian walk. It is from this point that a real Christian life can be built to the glory of God. This one may enjoy a full salvation. This is the design of God. There is an order, a succession.

*27 And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.*

*to meet, לקראת, Qal infin. w/לְ, to, prefixed to root קרא; 4.14, cometh forth to meet thee; 5.20, Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way; 7.15, stand by the river's brink against he come; 14.27, The Egyptians fled against it; 18.7, Moses went out to meet his father in law; 19.17, Moses brought forth the people ... to meet with God; evidently it can mean a good or evil confrontation.*

*And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him.*

*met him, ויפגשו, Qal fut, 3ps w/suff. 3ps, root פגש; to contact, but always translated with the English meet. (cf. 24.)*

*and kissed him*, וַיִּשָּׁק־לוֹ, Qal future, 3psm of נָשַׁק; most often tss.  
*kissed.*

How else can we account for the meeting of Moses and Aaron in the wilderness and at this place, Mt. Horeb, but by the leading of God? The LORD had been working both sides of this issue, Moses and Aaron were both being prepared for this work. Did Aaron know the specifics why he was led into the wilderness to meet with his brother, Moses? He probably did not. But Moses, once Aaron had arrived, revealed all that the LORD had done and was going to do *through them*.

*28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.*

*he had commanded him*, צִוְּהוּ, Piel (Intensive active) preterite, 3psm w/suff of 3psm, root צָוָה; this verb is most often in Piel, but otherwise in Pual (intensive passive); meaning the commandment is **actively, eagerly, and repetitively given**; a few times this is translated *change, appoint*, but almost always to *command*.

*29 And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the*

*and gathered*, וַיֵּאַסְפוּ, Qal fut. 3pplm of אָסַף; KJV, *to bring, gather, recover, bind, keep*.

בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

*children of Israel:*

sons

... when they had arrived back into Egypt.

Moses and Aaron wasted no time. Clearly the LORD had impressed upon them the importance of the task for them and they conveyed this to the elders.

*30 And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.*

As the LORD had said to Moses, Aaron would be his spokesman. Though this order might not be expressed in every instance it is proper to remember that Aaron is spokesman and likely the one who performed the majority of those miracles which were done. (cf. 9.23; 10.13; 17.9-12)

As we proceed through these events we learn that both Moses and Aaron had a rod through which it is said that the LORD worked. My opinion is that as Moses first spoke to Aaron, then Aaron to Pharaoh, so Moses would give a certain indication, for example, in some cases *stretch forth his hand*, and then Aaron would respond with some further gesture or action and the miracle was worked. Otherwise it is very difficult to say with any certainty whose rod it is that is being used. In any case Moses is as a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron Moses' prophet. (cf. 7.1)

*31 And the people believed:*

*believed, וַיִּאֱמָן, Hiphil (causative active) fut, 3psm of root אָמַן; in Hiphil, always believed or trusted.*

*and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel,*

*when they heard, וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ, Qal fut, 3p pl, masc of root שָׁמַע.*

*had visited, פָּקַד, Qal preterite; KJV, to visit, number, appoint, make, remember, count, charge, and seems to carry the general idea of reckoning, counting, accounting.*

*and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.*

*then they bowed their heads, וַיִּקְדוּ, Qal fut, 3p pl, masc of root קָדַד, to bow or stoop.*

*and worshipped, וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ, Hithpael (Reflexive) fut, 3p pl, masc of שָׁחַו; Ex. 18.7, did obeisance; Ex.20.5, Thou shalt [not] bow down thyself*

The LORD accounted to them this particular time to see their affliction. It was not that he was not always with them. This was much like the words, *it repented the LORD* (Ge.6.6). This marked a time for a change that God was making among men. It is not that God changed. Rather, the things as they had been done for some time will not continue in that way because the LORD was changing them.

The saints of God shall suffer much in the coming days, months, and a few more years, but that does not mean that He is not with them. And when they are reminded of the coming of the Son of man, when the times that that reality seems the most profound, they, like Israel then, bow their heads and worship and account these things to be true even if it be yet a little longer that they must suffer.

It was at the beginning of this chapter that Moses has said, *They will not believe me, nor hear my voice*. And yet the Hebrews did both. We are not told how many signs that Moses showed to the Hebrews as proofs that the LORD had sent him, though we know it was more than one. The conclusion is this: Moses was wrong and the LORD is always right. The LORD not only knows all things, but He does all things well. (Mk.7.37; Jn.16.30)

It is a great comfort to the children of God that he sees and knows their afflictions. How discouraging it would be if this were not the case.

*1Co 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

At this Word the children of God are moved to worship Him. Why. Because they heard that the LORD had *visited the children of Israel*. *Visitation* marks a special, notable presence and coming of the LORD.

*Ge 21:1 And the LORD visited פקד Sarah [to cause her to conceive seed] as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.*

*Ge 50:24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit **תקף** you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*

*Ex 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited **תקף** you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:*

*Ps 8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest **תקף** him? (The of God to men by the incarnation.)*

*Lu 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,  
69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ...*

*Lu 7:16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.*

*Ac 15:14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. (In a visible manifestation upon Cornelius and his house.)*

*1Pe 2:12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. (In the day that Christ comes to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe *in that day*. [2Thes.1.10])*

The days just preceding the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be among the darkest days of the history of the kingdom of God among men. All of that changes in a moment of time.

*Lk.17.24 For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.*

In the day that Noah was shut into the ark by the hand of the Lord there came also a sudden destruction against all of the unbelieving. (Lk.17.27) In the same day that Lot, his wife, and his two daughters were dragged out of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah these cities were destroyed with fire and brimstone. The visitation of our Lord Jesus Christ is a sudden deliverance of His people, and a sudden destruction of all of the unbelieving.

It was at midnight when the cry rang out that the bridegroom comes in Matthew chapter 25. Of ten virgins five were wise and had continued in preparation, trimmed their lamps and went out to meet Him; but the other five were foolish. Their lamps had gone out, they were unprepared *and* in a moment *the door was shut*. I can say this without any contradiction. Anyone who has believed in Christ, but has not made a public profession of faith in Him as Lord and Savior, who has not come to receive baptism at the hands of God's authority, his N.T. church, is not only unprepared to live for Christ, but is not certainly ready for that sure and momentous occasion of His second coming. The day of Christ is *at hand*.

The promise had been given to Abraham 430 years ago. His seed have been in Egypt for 210 years. That's a long time. But let's look at this another way. These dear brethren of Moses' day were not only 2000 years from creation, but they were 2000 years on the other side of Christ's first coming. And here we are today sitting 2000 years on this side of Christ. Brethren, we aren't setting dates, but by the Word of God, we are at the end of the end. The preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ hasn't changed to this day. Repent and be baptized because your sins have been forgiven you. Then get in a N.T. church that Jesus Christ built, and walk with them until He comes and calls us to His side.