

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

Kindergarten

Sunday Morning

Study 15

The Burning Bush

The Burning Bush

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To show the students the Yahweh is the one true God.

Key Verses

Exodus 2:11-15; 3:1-15; 4:1-12—Main Teaching Passage

Memory Verse - Proverbs 29:25 (December Memory Verse)

"The fear of man brings a snare,
But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe."

Hook

Have the class describe God. Make a list of all the different things that the students can think of about God. Have them think about what God does, how God acts, and why God might do things.

Ask the question, "Are there any other gods like this?"

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In Exodus 2:11-15, Moses had grown into a man. He headed out to inspect the land and saw one of his fellow Hebrews being beaten by an Egyptian. Moses chose to defend the Hebrew slave and, in doing so, killed the Egyptian taskmaster. Fearing for his life, Moses fled Egypt and ran out into the wilderness. There he became a shepherd, watching over the herds of Jethro.

In Exodus 3-4 we read that one day while tending to his flock, Moses saw a bush that had caught fire, and yet didn't seem to burn up. There he encountered God, the true God of the Hebrews, who commanded Moses to return to Pharaoh and demand that the people be freed from slavery. God revealed himself to Moses as "I AM that I am." He is the real, all-powerful, all-knowing, right here, right now God. Moses was afraid to return to Egypt and started to come up with excuses as to why God shouldn't send him. He stated that Pharaoh wouldn't listen to him, that he was a bad public speaker, and that he would make a fool of himself. When all of these things didn't work, Moses asked God directly if He would choose someone else to go. God, however, had made up His mind, and eventually Moses agreed to go.

LOOK

Moses had grown up in a palace with all the best food, all the nicest things, and more money than you could ever spend in your lifetime. He was a prince, the son of a king. He would have grown up going to the best schools with the best teachers and would have been taught many things, but he especially would have been taught about the Egyptian gods. It is very likely that Moses grew up worshipping Ra the sun god, Hapi the god of the Nile River, Heket the frog goddess, Anubis the god of the dead, and many others. Moses, however, was going to meet the real God, and he would very quickly forget all of those false gods and worship the one true God alone.

When Moses had grown up to be a man, he went walking outside of the palace. He saw a slave, a Hebrew like Moses, being beaten up. Moses defended the slave and, while doing so, killed the Egyptian who was attacking him. Scared of the consequences that might happen, Moses ran away. He left behind all of the things that he thought would make him happy: the nice clothes, the money, the good food, and comfortable palace. Moses would learn that when he got away from those things, he would find some things that really and truly would make him happy. He found a

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

new family and a wife, but most importantly, Moses met the true and living God.

While he was taking care of the sheep one day, God appeared to Moses in a burning bush. He told Moses that he would need to return to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let the Hebrew slaves go. Moses asked who he should say sent him, basically asking what God's name was, and God replied, "I AM THAT I AM." Moses was going to go back to Egypt and tell them that a true God had sent him. This wasn't a false god like Anubis or Ra. This wasn't a distant god that never answered you like Heket. Moses was coming back in the name of the true and living God, who would show all of Egypt the power that a real God could wield.

One of the most important things to take notice of in this passage is that God had not forgotten about the Hebrews and He had not abandoned them. Even though they were having a tough time, God was still there and He still cared for them. God was going to see them set free, and He was going to use Moses to do it.

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the students why Moses left Egypt. What happened to him that caused him to worship the true and living God?

Pray: Thank the Lord for His incredible love for us. Praise Him for showing us that great love by sending Jesus to the world. Ask Him to help us to worship Him as the true and living God.

Parent Question: How did God reveal himself to Moses?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary Exodus 2-4 (select passages) By David Guzik

Moses' escape from Egypt.

1. (11) Moses grows and gains sympathy for his fellow Israelites.

Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren.

a. **When Moses was grown:** Acts 7:23 says this happened when Moses was forty years old. Up until then, he was trained and groomed to become the next Pharaoh of Egypt (according to Josephus), all the while aware of his true origins because of his mother.

i. **Looked at their burdens:** "The phrase means more than 'to see'. It means, 'to see with emotion', either satisfaction (Genesis 9:16) or, as here, with distress (Genesis 21:16). Moses is one who shares God's heart." (Cole)

ii. Hebrews 11:24-26 tells us some of what happened in the heart and mind of Moses as he **looked at their burdens**. It says that by faith, Moses deliberately decided to identify with the people of Israel rather than his Egyptian prestige and opportunity:

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. (Hebrews 11:24-26)

iii. *Moses knew who he was.* As much allure and ease there was in life as an Egyptian, he knew "That's not me." His faith in the God he served helped him to know *who* he was.

b. **He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren:** Because Moses had a heart filled with sympathy and brotherhood (**his brethren**) toward his people, he could not stand by while one of his fellow Israelites endured a **beating**.

2. (12) Moses murders an Egyptian.

So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

a. **He looked this way and that way:** These are the actions of a man who knew he was about to do wrong. Moses had several reasons for doing what he did, but his concern to hide what he did shows a troubled conscience.

b. **He killed the Egyptian:** The Bible itself explains some of Moses' thinking behind this action. Acts 7:23-25 explains that Moses did this to defend and avenge the beaten Israelite, but also with the expectation that his fellow Israelites would recognize him as their deliverer.

i. *Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. (Acts 7:23-25)*

ii. Just like Jesus, Moses could not deliver when he lived in the palaces of glory. He had to come down off the throne, away from the palace and into a humble place before he could deliver his people.

3. (13-14) Moses is rejected by his own people.

And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?" Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!"

a. **Why are you striking your companion?** Moses had reason to believe that his education, royal background, success, and great sympathy for the people of Israel would give him credibility among them. He here tried to intervene in a violent dispute between **two Hebrew men**.

i. We could say that Moses was first a *murderer*, and then a *meddler*.

b. **Who made you a prince and a judge over us?** Moses seemed to act like **a prince** given his royal background. He acted like **a judge** in that he determined that one of these men **did the wrong**. He seemed to be the perfect **prince** and **judge** for Israel, but they did not want him.

i. A **prince** has the right to rule and expects your loyalty. A **judge** has the right to tell you what to do, and to punish you if you don't do it. In rejecting Moses they said to him, "We don't want you to rule over us or tell us what to do." People reject Jesus on the same thinking, and just like Moses Jesus was rejected at His first coming.

ii. Both Moses and Jesus were:

- Favored by God from birth
- Miraculously preserved in childhood
- Mighty in words and deed
- Offered deliverance to Israel
- Rejected with spite
- Rejected in their right to be *prince and a judge* over Israel

iii. Just like Jesus after him, Moses could not deliver when he lived in the palaces of glory. He had to come down off the throne, away from the palace and into a humble place before he could deliver his people.

iv. Moses planned the deliverance of Israel the way any man would, and logically saw himself as the key man - because of his royal background, education, success, and sympathy for his people.

v. Moses had his plans, and they made sense from his perspective. Yet God's plan was radically different. 40 years later, God led Moses and his brother Aaron to Pharaoh with a special stick that turned into a snake. Moses asked Pharaoh to let Israel go back to Canaan; Pharaoh said no, so God brought plagues of blood, frogs, mosquitoes, flies, cattle disease, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness. Finally God judged stubborn Pharaoh and Egypt with a plague on the firstborn of Egypt, Israel escaped across the Red Sea. The waters of the Red Sea came back and killed the Egyptian army, and the Israelites crossed the wilderness and came to Canaan. *Such an unlikely plan would never come from man.*

Exodus 3 - Moses and the Burning Bush

A. God's call to Moses from the burning bush.

1. (1-3) Moses and the burning bush on Mount Horeb.

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed. Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

a. **Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law:** For 40 years Moses lived as an obscure shepherd in the desert of Midian. At this point his life was so humble that he didn't even have a flock of sheep to call his own - the sheep

belonged to his **father-in-law**.

i. **Tending the flock:** "The Hebrew suggests that this was his habitual occupation." (Cole)

b. **The back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God:** Moses brought the sheep to this mountain, also later called Mount Sinai. **Horeb** probably means "desert" or "desolation," and the name gives an idea of the terrain.

c. **The bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed:** It wasn't just that Moses saw a bush burning; apparently, it is not uncommon for a plant like this to spontaneously ignite out in that desert. Nevertheless, two things were distinctive about that bush:

- **The Angel of the LORD appeared...from the midst** of the bush
- Though the bush burned, **the bush was not consumed**.

i. "Though the bush burned with fire, it did not crackle or diminish, no leaf curled and no branch charred. It burned, but was not consumed." (Meyer)

ii. The bush burning but not being consumed was a magnetic sight to Moses - it drew him in for a closer examination. Some think the burning bush to be a symbol of Israel, or the people of God more generally - afflicted but not destroyed, because God is in the midst of them.

iii. Yet we can also say that the burning bush was a picture of the cross. The Hebrew word used to describe this bush is comes from the word "to stick or to prick," this meaning a thorn-bush or bramble. We can think of the cross - where Jesus, crowned with thorns, endured the fires of judgment and yet was not consumed by them - and be reminded of the cross when we consider the burning bush.

iv. **I will now turn aside to see this great sight:** Whatever exactly Moses saw, it was nothing *normal*. "To explain what happened here as a temporary mirage of reflected sunlight on some red leaves or a campfire of some Bedouin or even the phenomenon of Saint Elmo's fire is to substitute *our* experience for Moses' forty years in that area and his estimate that it was indeed unusual." (Kaiser)

v. Clarke on the **Angel of the LORD:** "Not a created angel certainly, for he is called *Jehovah*, Exodus 3:4 and has the most expressive attributes of the Godhead applied to him...Yet he is an *angel, malach, a messenger*, in whom was the name of God....And who is this but JESUS, the Leader, Redeemer, and Saviour of all mankind?"

2. (4-6) From the burning bush, God calls to Moses.

So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is holy ground*." Moreover He said, "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 upon God.

a. **When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look:** God didn't speak to Moses until He had Moses' attention. Often God's Word doesn't touch our heart the way that it might because we don't give it our attention.

i. The burning bush was a spectacular phenomenon that captured Moses' attention; but it changed nothing until Moses received the *Word of God* that came to him there.

b. **God called to him from the midst of the bush:** Moses didn't see anyone in the burning bush; yet God, in the presence of the *Angel of the LORD* (Exodus 3:2) was there, calling out to Moses from the midst of the burning bush.

i. Undoubtedly, this is another occasion where Jesus appeared before His incarnation in the Old Testament as *the Angel of the LORD*, as He did many times (Genesis 16:7-13, Judges 2:1-5, Judges 6:11-24, Judges 13:3-22).

ii. We say this is God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, because of God the Father, it is said *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him* (John 1:18), and that no man has ever seen God in the Person of the Father (1 Timothy 6:16).

c. **Moses, Moses!** God's first words to Moses called him by name. This shows that even though Moses was now an obscure, forgotten shepherd on the backside of the desert, God knew who he was, and Moses was important to God.

i. The *double call* (**Moses, Moses!**) implied importance and urgency, as when God called *Abraham, Abraham!* (Genesis 22:11), *Samuel, Samuel!* (1 Samuel 3:10), *Simon, Simon* (Luke 22:31), *Martha, Martha* (Luke 10:41), and *Saul, Saul* (Acts 9:4).

d. **Then He said:** God told Moses to do two things to show special honor to this place because of the immediate presence of God.

- He told Moses to keep a distance (**Do not draw near this place**).
- He commanded Moses to show reverence for God's presence (**Take your sandals off your feet**).

i. **Do not draw near** literally has the sense of "stop coming closer." Moses was on his way for an up-close examination of the burning bush when God stopped him short.

ii. This was a holy place; and because God is holy, there will always be a distance between God and man. Even in perfection man will never be equal to God, though we will be able to have closer fellowship with Him than ever.

iii. **Take your sandals off your feet:** Removing the sandals showed an appropriate *humility*, because the poorest and most needy have no shoes, and servants usually went barefoot. It also recognized the *immediate presence* of God. In many cultures, you take off your shoes when you come into someone's house, and now Moses was in God's "house," a place of His immediate presence.

iv. "As this sole must like in dust, gravel, and sand about the foot when travelling, and render it very uneasy, hence the custom of frequently *washing* the feet in those countries where these sandals were worn. *Pulling off the shoes* was, therefore, an emblem of laying aside the *pollutions* contracted by *walking* in the *way of sin*." (Clarke)

e. **The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob:** God revealed Himself to Moses by declaring His relationship to the patriarchs. This reminded Moses that God is the God of the covenant, and His covenant with Israel was still valid and important. This wasn't a "new God" meeting Moses, but the same God that dealt with **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**.

i. God would reveal Himself to Moses more intimately than He had to any of the patriarchs; yet it all began with God reminding Moses of the bridge of covenant they met on.

ii. Some in the days of Moses might have thought that God neglected or forgot His covenant in the 400 years of Israel's slavery in Egypt, since the time of the patriarchs. Nevertheless, God was at work during that time, preserving and multiplying the nation.

f. **Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God:** God told Moses to do what was appropriate for a creature before their Creator - to revere and recognize His holiness. Moses responded as a man who knew he was not only a creature, but also a sinful creature - he **hid his face**.

i. In his years in the wilderness of Midan, Moses must have often remembered how he murdered an Egyptian and how proud he was to think he could deliver Israel himself. Moses might have remembered a thousands sins, both real and imagined - now, when God appeared, he responded in a way completely different than he might have 40 years before.

B. God's commission to Moses.

1. (7-10) God explains His general plan to Moses, and Moses' place in the plan.

And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. Now therefore, be-

hold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

a. **I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land:** God did not just *then* decide to give Israel the land of Canaan. It was the same land that He promised to the patriarchs some 400 years previous to this.

b. **I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry:** God wanted Moses and Israel to know His compassionate care for them.

i. To this point, Moses' experience emphasized the *separation* between himself and God. Moses could never burn without being consumed. Moses could not speak from the midst of a fire. Moses couldn't keep his sandals on in the divine presence. Moses was not the eternal God of the patriarchs. The separation between God and Moses was real; yet God would soon show His care and compassion to Moses and the people of Israel. God is *separate*, but not necessarily *distant*. God is separate; yet God cares and connects Himself to our needs.

c. **I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people:** In Exodus 3:8 God said, *I have come down to deliver them*. Then at Exodus 3:10 God said, **Come now, therefore, and I will send you**. If God said He would deliver them, why did He use or need Moses at all? This shows that God often uses and chooses to rely on human instruments.

i. **God could do it all by Himself, but it is most often God's plan to work with and through people, as we are workers together with Him (2 Corinthians 6:1).**

Exodus 4 - Moses' Commission from God

A. God gives Moses signs to confirm his ministry.

1. (1) Moses asks, "How will they believe me?"

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.'"

a. **But suppose they will not believe me:** It was not wrong for Moses to initially ask, "*Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?*" (Exodus 3:11); this was a logical question considering how great the task was. Yet God answered this question more than adequately in Exodus 3:12: *I will certainly be with you*. After that point, and in this passage, Moses' questions show unbelief more than sincere seeking.

b. **But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice:** In Exodus 3:18, God promised that the leaders of Israel *would* listen to Moses. He said, "*They will heed your voice*." When Moses made this protest he may as well have said, "But what if you are wrong, God?"

i. It was good when Moses had no confidence in the flesh; but it was bad that he then lacked confidence in God. In view of the burning bush, the voice of God, and the divine encounter, there was no place for Moses to say, "**But**."

ii. "We are ever prone, when God is calling us to some high service, to say 'But,' and this to introduce our statement of the difficulties as we see them." (Morgan)

2. (2-5) The first sign: Moses' rod turns to a snake and back again.

So the LORD said to him, "What *is* that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." 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. 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), 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."

a. **What is that in your hand?** This reflects a precious principle regarding how God uses people - God used what Moses had in his **hand**. Moses' years of tending sheep were not useless. Those years had put into Moses **hand** things he could use for God's glory. God didn't use the scepter that was in Moses' royal hand when he lived in Egypt, but He did use the simple shepherd's staff.

i. God likes to use what is in our hand.

- God used what was in Shamgar's hand (Judges 3:31)
- God used what was in David's hand (1 Samuel 17:49)
- God used the jawbone of a donkey in Samson's hand (Judges 15:15)
- God used five loaves and two fish in the hand of a little boy (John 6:9)

b. **He said, "A rod"**: That rod of Moses would part the Red Sea. It would strike a rock and see water pour forth. It would be raised over battle until Israel won. It would be called *the rod of God* (Exodus 4:20 and 17:9).

c. **It became a serpent**: Not only did Moses' rod become like a snake; it became a real snake that was frightening enough to Moses that he ran from it.

d. **Reach out your hand and take it by the tail**: We see the faith of Moses when he reached out to grab the snake when God commanded him to. The tail is the most dangerous place to grab a snake; yet Moses was unharmed.

i. In this little incident Moses learned how to do what God told him to do even when it was uncomfortable.

e. **That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers...has appeared to you**: This miracle would make the children of Israel realize that **the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob** was with them and that the God of the covenant had not forsaken them.

3. (6-9) The second and third signs: Moses is made leprous and whole again; water turns to blood and back again.

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. 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. "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. 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*. And the water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry *land*."

a. **It was restored like his other flesh**: Each of the first two signs had to do with *transformation*. Something good and useful (a rod or a hand) was made into something evil (a serpent or a leprous hand), and significantly, they were then transformed back again.

i. There was a real message in the first two signs. The first said, "Moses, if you obey Me, your enemies will be made powerless." The second said "Moses, if you obey Me, your pollution can be made pure." Doubts in each of these areas probably hindered Moses, and before those signs spoke to anyone else, they spoke to Moses. This is the pattern with all God's leaders.

ii. "The Hebrew word for leprosy covered a number of assorted diseases much as our word 'cancer' currently does." (Kaiser)

b. **The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land**: The third sign was simply a sign of judgment. Good, pure waters were made foul and bloody by the work of God and they did not turn back again. This showed that if the miracles of transformation did not turn the hearts of the people, then perhaps the sign of judgment would. **If they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice** shows that if the sign of judgment was only given when unbelief persisted in the face of the miracles of transformation right before them.

4. (10) Moses makes an excuse: "I can't speak well."

Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I *am* slow of speech and slow of tongue."

a. **O my Lord, I am not eloquent:** After these remarkably persuasive signs, Moses still objected to God's call. Moses revealed that he was not confident with his ability to speak - **slow of speech** is literally "heavy of mouth."

b. **I am slow of speech and slow of tongue:** It seems that Moses' excuse was not justified. Clearly 40 years before this Moses was not **slow of speech and slow of tongue**. Acts 7:22 says *Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds*.

i. Those years of eloquence in Egypt ended 40 years before this. For 40 years, Moses only seemed to speak to sheep. His *self* confidence was gone; but he needed *God* confidence instead.

ii. "Thus Moses' complaint was not in defective articulation, but in his inability to take command of Hebrew and Egyptian (cf. Ezekiel 3:5, where 'heavy of tongue' = difficulty with a foreign language...)." (Kaiser)

5. (11-12) God's response to Moses' excuse.

So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? *Have not I, the LORD?* Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."

a. **Who made man's mouth?** The fact that Moses believed that he was not eloquent is completely beside the point. The God who created the most eloquent mouths who ever lived was on his side.

b. **Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?** This is a dramatic statement revealing the sovereignty of God, and God revealed it in the context of an invitation to trust God and to work with Him.

i. There is not the slightest sense of fatalism in this declaration of God's sovereignty. It is *never* "God is so mighty we can't do anything," but it is *always* "God is so mighty, He can work through us if we make ourselves available."

c. **Makes the mute, the deaf...the blind:** Some think this is cruel of God. Nevertheless the point here was not to analyze the origin of evil, but to show that God is so mighty that He can even call the mute, deaf, and blind to do His work. Moses' perceived inadequacies didn't matter at all.

i. If Moses was a poor speaker, was this news to God? Does God have trouble keeping track of who is deaf, who is blind, and who is mute? Does Moses really think God made a mistake here?

ii. If Moses was a poor speaker, it didn't matter - the mighty God said, "**I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.**" By extension, God is sufficient for us, no matter what real or imagined inadequacies we have.

6. (13-17) Moses' unwillingness, and God's reply.

But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever *else* You may send." So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs."

a. **Please send by the hand of whomever else You may send:** Finally, Moses was done with excuses and showed the real state of his heart. Simply, he would much rather that God send someone else. His problem wasn't really a lack of ability; it was a lack of willingness.

i. "It's common for men to give pretended reasons instead of one real one." (Benjamin Franklin)

b. **So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses:** God was not angry when Moses asked, "*Who am I?*" (Exodus

3:11). He was not angry when Moses asked, "Who should I say sent me?" (Exodus 3:13). He was not angry when Moses disbelieved God's Word and said, "*suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice*" (Exodus 4:1). He was not even angry when Moses falsely claimed that he was not and had never been eloquent (Exodus 4:10) - but God *was* angry when Moses was just plain unwilling.

i. There may be a hundred understandable reasons why Moses was unwilling, some of them making a lot of sense. Perhaps Moses really *wanted* to serve, but was unwilling because of past rejection. Nevertheless, the basic truth was that Moses was *unwilling*, not *unable*.

c. **Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well:** When God brought Aaron to help lead with Moses, it was an expression of His chastening to Moses, not of His approval or giving in to Moses. Aaron was more of a *problem* to Moses than help.

i. Aaron did turn out to be a source of problems for Moses. Aaron instigated the worship of the golden calf, fashioning the calf himself and building the altar himself (Exodus 32:1-6). Aaron's sons blasphemed God with impure offerings (Leviticus 10:1-7). At one time, Aaron openly led a mutiny against Moses (Numbers 12:1-8).

ii. As these episodes unfolded, Moses surely looked back at why the LORD gave Aaron to Moses as a partner - because God was angry at Moses' unwillingness.

d. **I know that he can speak well:** Aaron was a smooth talker, but a man weak on *content*. Moses had to put the words of God into the mouth of Aaron (**you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth**). In this sense Aaron was like a modern-day news reader, who does nothing but read what others have written for him.

i. Aaron wasn't God's spokesman; he was the spokesman of Moses. God doesn't need leaders like this. It isn't God's way to have a man minister as a smooth talker but not be qualified for leadership. God wants to combine the offices of "talker" and "leader."