

Moses' three signs of the testimony

Moses is tending the flock of Jethro at Horeb, the mountain of God; and the Lord speaks to him through a bush, burning with a supernatural fire. The Lord gives Moses instructions regarding the children of Israel, and Moses expresses his doubts whether or not they will believe him. Moses is really questioning the Lord's plan of salvation for the Israelites.

The Lord gives Moses three signs by which to demonstrate his authority to the Israelites; that he really is sent by the Lord. I see two sets of results for each of these three signs of the testimony; there was an immediate result, when the Israelites believed Moses; and then there was also a prophetic result, when the Israelites rebelled against Moses' authority from the Lord.

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus shall you say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " (Exo 3:14)

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.' " 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."

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. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land." (Exo 4:1-9)

Moses is given three signs, to testify for him to the Israelites, as having God's authority:-

- 1) *The rod of God becomes a serpent when it is thrown down, and it becomes a rod again when he grasps it.*
- 2) *His hand that is healthy, becomes leprous, and then is restored again.*
- 3) *The water taken from the river, becomes blood on the dry land.*

The immediate result, the Israelites believe Moses

And the Lord said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him. So Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped. (Exo 4:27-31)

1) Prophetic sign - The rod of God becomes a serpent

A king's scepter represents his authority, and the rod of God which Moses carried also represented his authority from God. When the Israelites challenge Moses authority, serpents appear in the desert, which bite and kill the people.

Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."

So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us."

So Moses prayed for the people. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived. (Num 21:4-9)

2) Prophetic sign - The hand placed in the bosom becomes leprous

The hand placed in the bosom, speaks to me of closeness and family. When Aaron and Miriam, Moses' older brother and sister, questioned Moses' authority, Miriam was struck with leprosy.

Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. So they said, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also? And the Lord heard it. (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.) Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out.

Then the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. Then He said, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?"

So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them, and He departed. And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!"

So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"

Then the Lord said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again."

So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again. And afterward the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran. (Num 12:1-16)

3) Prophetic sign - The water from the river becomes blood on the dry land.

People are sometimes represented as 'waters' in the Bible. Here are three examples from David and Solomon.

Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, where floods overflow me. I am weary with my crying; my throat is dry; my eyes fail while I wait for my God.
(Psa 69:1-3)

"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side," Let Israel now say - "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters would have overwhelmed us, the stream would have gone over our soul; then the swollen waters would have gone over our soul."

Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth. Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. (Psa 124:1-8)

Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days. Give a serving to seven, and also to eight, for you do not know what evil will be on the earth. (Ecc 11:1-2)

The Israelite people were led out by Moses from Egypt by the Nile river, into the dry desert land to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. When they were told to go into the promised land the people rebelled against Moses. Caleb and Joshua, stood with Moses and Aaron.

Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."
(Num 13:30-31)

So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."

Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them."

And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel. (Num 14:1-10)

And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,
"How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me?
I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.

Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.

And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. I the Lord have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.' "

Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the Lord. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land. (Num 14:26-38)

So the waters from the river (the Israelites) were poured out on the dry land. The disobedient people died in the desert over a period of forty years, and their blood soaked into the dry land.

These three later events, testify to the prophetic nature of these signs, which the Lord gave to Moses.

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