

12.04 Moses Returns to Egypt (Exodus 4:10–31)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- “Life of Moses” Series 1 Flash-a-Cards from A Beka Book and/or pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- (optional) *Herein Is Love Commentary Series; Exodus, A Commentary for Children*, by Nancy Ganz, Shepherd Press, 2002.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *eloquent*: persuasive speaking
- *mute*: unable to speak
- *hardened heart*: stubbornness
- *staff*: a long rod used in shepherding
- *rite*: a religious procedure
- *elders*: older men who were leaders of their people

Scripture: (NASB)

Exodus 4:10 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.” 11 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? 12 Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.” 13 But he said, “Please, Lord, now send *the message* by whomever You will.”

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.”

18 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.” 19 Now the LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.” 20 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.

21 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. 22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, ‘Israel is My son, My firstborn. 23 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.’”

24 Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. 25 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.” 26 So He let him alone. At that time she said, “*You are a*

bridegroom of blood”—because of the circumcision.

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

Introduction/Review:

Forty years after Pharaoh’s daughter found baby Moses and educated him in the finest schools, Moses identified himself with his people, the descendants of Jacob/Israel. His zeal in this pursuit, however, ended in murder so that he had to flee Egypt. After working forty years for his father-in-law, Jethro, Moses was called by God at age eighty to deliver the Israelites from Egypt. How did God call Moses? [He appeared to him at a burning bush.] God gave three signs to prove to Moses and the people that He would take the Israelites out of Egypt and use Moses as the leader to accomplish this job. What were those signs? [Staff turned to a snake; Hand becoming leprous and then healed; water from the Nile turned to blood.]

Story:

With such mighty signs of God’s presence and power, surely God would accomplish what He planned through Moses.

Moses’ objections

But Moses wasn’t so sure. He had questions about this call. [Review #1–3 on the Objections chart found below.] First, he asked, “Who am I that I should lead this people?” Next, he asked God what name he should use for God when he spoke to the people. Third, he anticipated that the people would not believe him. What should he do in that case?

God fully answered these objections by saying, first, He would be with Moses; second, His name, “I Am,” which means He is eternal, immutable, and faithful, is the name Moses should use for God; and, third, God would give signs so that the people would believe.

Moses was still not satisfied. He 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.”

This objection seems to be false; at least it had not been true forty years earlier when Moses had been “a man of power in words and deeds” (Acts 7:22). ✓Had Moses lost all confidence in God and himself during these forty years while he had cared for Jethro’s flock?

God answered that slow-of-speech objection very directly. He said, “Who made man’s mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth and will teach you what you are to say.”

In spite of this positive assurance from God Himself, Moses dared to protest even more: “Please, Lord, now send whomever You want to send.” ✓I infer from this statement that Moses, having run out of excuses, plainly stated that he didn’t want to do what God had asked of him. He wanted out.

Moses’ helper

All of these excuses and objections and unbelief finally caused the LORD’s anger to burn against Moses. God said, “This is what I will do. Your brother, Aaron, speaks fluently. (By the way, he is coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.) In the deliverance of My people, when you speak to him, you will give him the words to say. I, even I, will be with your mouth and with his mouth. I will

teach you what you are to do, and he shall speak for you to the people. He will be as a mouth for you, and you will be as God to him. Take your staff; with it you shall perform the signs that I produce.”

Pharaoh's resistance

“One more thing, Moses,” God said. “When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power. But you need to know this: I will harden Pharaoh’s heart so that he will not let the people go. When you see that he has hardened his heart, say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the LORD says to you: “Israel is My son, My firstborn. Let My son go that he may serve Me. If you refuse to let him go, I, the LORD, will slay *your* son, *your* firstborn.”’”

That’s how Moses’ first conversation with God ended. God was compassionate toward Moses, putting up with his objections and even providing for Moses’ request to have someone else help him deliver the Israelites. ✓Moses might later regret that he did not trust God’s original plan, but, like all of us, he will grow in faith. At the same time, God warned Moses that this task would not be easy.

God also reassured Moses in another matter—his fear of the angry Pharaoh who wanted to kill him. The LORD said to Moses, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.” Whew! That was one less worry.

Moses needed to take care of one more piece of business before he could go to Egypt: he had to notify his “boss”—his father-in-law, Jethro—that he would be moving and could no longer work as shepherd. He went home and said to Jethro, “Please, let me go so that I may return to my brethren who are in Egypt and see if they are still alive.”

Jethro answered, “Go in peace.”

Moses' return

So Moses took his wife and his two sons, who rode on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt. One essential piece of equipment that went with him was his shepherd’s staff, now called “the staff of God.”

At the lodging place that night, a strange thing happened. The LORD met Moses and was about to put him to death. Why would God do this after calling him to go back to Egypt and deliver the Israelites? Moses’ wife, Zipporah, knew the reason and resolved the problem, saving Moses’ life. The issue was that Moses had neglected to obey a ceremonial rite (circumcision) that God had commanded all His people since the time of Abraham. Zipporah took care of the condition, and Moses was spared.*

Aaron's meeting

Meanwhile, the LORD communicated to Aaron, Moses’ brother, who was still in Egypt. God said, “Go to meet Moses in the wilderness.” Aaron obeyed and went to meet Moses at the mountain of God, Sinai, the same place where Moses had seen the burning bush. After all these long years, Moses and Aaron greeted each other warmly. Then Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD and all the signs that God had commanded him to do.

When Moses and Aaron arrived back in Egypt, they gathered together all the elders of the sons of Israel and told them all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Who, do you suppose, did the speaking? [Allow discussion if you wish.] The answer is, Aaron, just as Moses had entreated God.

Aaron then performed those three signs in the sight of the people. Did the people believe that God cared and would save them from Egypt? Yes, they did. The Bible states, “When they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, they bowed low and worshiped.”

*It is thought that Moses sent Zipporah and his two sons back to Jethro at this point or when he met Aaron, for we do not read about her again until Exodus 18:2, when she comes with her father to meet Moses. “Moses, finding his family would be exposed to danger, or would be too great an incumbrance upon him in the discharge

of his great work he had to do in Egypt, sent them back to his father-in-law until a fit opportunity should offer of their coming to him” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/exodus-18-2.html>).

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:

Jesus came doing signs and wonders (miracles) to prove He is the Son of God.

If the people believed Moses’ signs, God would work in their behalf. Jesus said regarding His signs, “If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father” (John 10:37, 38).

- Does a student have trouble expressing thoughts? Remind that student that God made the mouth; He can teach one what to say and how to say it.
- A difficult subject for some is the fact that, as Exodus 4:38 states, God makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, and the blind. Although these conditions are handicaps, God can use them. We need to trust Him (Isaiah 45:5, 7, 9, 10, 12; Romans 11:33, 36).

Activities:

- Play dough: mouth; using cookie cutters of letters, form words like *mouth*, *God*, *words*, *Moses*.
- Snack:

A mouth made from apple wedges, peanut butter, and mini-marshmallows. Cut one-sixth wedges from an apple. Cut a wedge inside the one-sixth wedge. Spread peanut butter on the inside wedge. Place mini-marshmallows to look like teeth. (Photo is from <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/444308319462248401/?lp=true>.)



- Sing stanzas 1–3 of “Moses Gets out of Egypt,” found in Lesson 12.01b or on the Songs page at teachingthebibleto kids.org, where an audio and visuals are available.
- Review questions: (Game: The following words are found below: “Pharaoh’s heart will harden; he won’t let the people go.” Back the page with a paper towel, and cut the words apart. For each correct answer, students place a word in order on a flannel board. If the teacher wishes, students may place the words in random order and later rearrange them in correct order.)
 1. What was Moses’ objection that deals with talking? [“I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”]
 2. What was God’s answer to this excuse? [“Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.”]
 3. When did God become angry with Moses? [When he asked that God use someone else.]
 4. What was the final arrangement as to who would speak for God? [God would speak to Moses, and Moses would speak to Aaron. Aaron would speak to the people.]
 5. To whom did Moses speak before he left for Egypt? [His father-in-law, Jethro/Reuel/Habab.]
 6. Who had died in Egypt? [The pharaoh.]
 7. What warning did God give Moses about how the new Pharaoh would respond? [God would harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the people go.]
 8. What would happen to Pharaoh if he didn’t let God’s firstborn, Israel, go? [God would kill Pharaoh’s firstborn son.]
 9. Who met Moses in the wilderness? [Aaron, Moses’ brother.]
 10. How did the people respond when they heard Aaron’s words and saw the signs? [They believed, bowed, and worshiped.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Exodus 4:11, 12—The LORD said to [Moses], “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.”

Handwork:

- For each student print on pink paper the picture found below of an oval mouth. Students will color the half-circle tongue red. Cut out the oval, and fold it in half (hamburger fold). Glue mini-marshmallows or small pieces of white paper around the perimeter to indicate teeth.

eloquent

mute

hardened heart

staff

rite

elders











Moses' Objections

1. "Who am I that I should lead out the people?"
2. "What is the name of God that I shall tell the people?"
3. "What if they don't believe me?"
4. "I don't know how to talk."
5. "Please send someone else."

God's Answers

1. "I will be with you."
2. "I Am That I Am (Jehovah) has sent you."
3. "I will give signs."
4. "I made your mouth."
5. "I will speak to you, and you will speak to Aaron."



<http://www.gracenola.org/brick-making-in-egypt/>

Pharaoh's ₁

heart ₂

will ₃

harden; ₄

he ₅

won't ₆

let ₇

the ₈

people ₉

go. ₁₀

Exodus 4:11, 12—The LORD said to
[Moses], “Who has made man’s mouth?
Or who makes him mute or deaf, or
seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?
Now then go, and I, even I, will be with
your mouth, and teach you what you are
to say.”

