

We left Moses discouraged and doubtful that God could accomplish the task through him. The people's extra burden of increased labor turned them against Moses, just as Pharaoh had planned. (5:21) It seemed like the wisdom of Pharaoh had prevailed, but then Moses prayed. Prayer changes things, but more often it changes our attitudes instead of our circumstances.

We hold up certain prayers in Scripture as model prayers. This is certainly one that is never cited, but it is a model that we all resort to by default. "What's going on? Why me? Nothing is going according to my understanding of what I think you told me. Woe is me! Can I just forget the whole thing?"

If you haven't prayed that prayer in some form or another, your day is most likely coming. We all seem to have to go through that place of discouragement, where God challenges us to have faith in Him and just believe. (Hebrews 11:6)

God could have rebuked Moses for his doubts, for not listening to what God had already said. After all, God appeared in the burning bush and warned him that Pharaoh would not listen. God promised that He would compel Pharaoh to yield with wonders done by His mighty hand. "Only then", God warned, "will he let you go." (3:19-20) Did Moses forget so quickly, or did he just prefer to forget that part? Or did he remember, but prefer to not experience that hardship, and so is now whining about it.

Judging by my own human nature, I'd say it was the latter. He remembered it well enough to record it for posterity. What Moses recorded about himself makes him look rather bad. That is integrity. Even if you think someone else wrote it, they are writing about their hero. Yet, like all the Bible characters, they are so much like us. There is an authentic ring to Moses' complaint. He is just like us.

The God of all grace and comfort answered Moses' whining. He'd rather hear your honest heart than some nice sounding religious words. (Luke 18:13) Remember, He already knows what's in your heart. You can't fool God. (1Chronicles 28:9)

¹ But the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land." Allow me to paraphrase this. "You see Pharaoh's stubbornness and clever dealing now, but the day is coming when you will see how I cause him to drive you all out of the land."

The difficult initial encounter was necessary to appreciate the extent of the miracle. If Pharaoh had just acquiesced, God would not have been glorified, and the people of Egypt would not have a revelation of the true God. Israel may have been grateful, but they would have been tempted in an even greater way to return. This difficulty was a necessary opening act,

Commented [notes1]: Exodus 5:21 (ESV) 21 and they said to them, "The LORD look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

Commented [notes4]: Luke 18:13 (ESV) 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'

Commented [notes5]: 1 Chronicles 28:9 (ESV) 9 "And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever."

Commented [notes2]: Hebrews 11:6 (ESV) 6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Commented [notes3]: Exodus 3:19-20 (ESV) 19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.

and so are many of the difficulties we face in life. (Romans 5:3-5)

Don't always interpret problems to be a sign of a wrong direction. They may simply be the prelude to a greater victory. (Hebrews 11:39-40)

Trials help us learn and grow. We learn to have faith in God. We give Him greater honor and praise when He turns the situation around. In many cases we are strengthened against temptation because of the consequences we know we would endure if we gave in to them. We learn a little more about the amazing God we serve. We learn to listen and trust what He has said, even when things seem to go from bad to worse. We turn our eyes from this world, to God. (2Corinthians 4:18) This is what Moses was doing, in spite of his doubts. And God said, "Now you shall see..."

² *God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD.* God is saying, "In case you are wondering if I made a mistake, remember that I am already in the future." The eternally existent God never has to look back and say, "Whoops! I should have done that differently!" (Numbers 23:19) When you are perplexed about how things are turning out, remember, God isn't. He knows. He knew before He directed you. He sees the results. He is the I AM. (Ephesians 2:10)

That is enough of an answer for all of Moses' doubts and ours as well. He is! If we could just grab hold of that concept, what a difference it would make in how we interpret the seeming setbacks of life. (Romans 8:28)

That alone was enough of an answer, but God continued, ³*I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as*

God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. The patriarchs may have had an excuse because God had not revealed this aspect of His nature. They called Him El Shaddai, the all-sufficient or Almighty God. But God had revealed His name to Moses, and with that name came an increased understanding of God. With that understanding comes and expectation that we should see life in the light of that new knowledge. (Exodus 34:6) Do we?

What is your reaction when you get in Moses' situation? You had an expectation, and not only did it not come to pass, but things got worse. You can then blame God or trust God. **Which you do, and the attitude you choose are determined by what you really believe about God.**

God reminded Moses that He had appeared to the patriarchs. In seeing the burning bush Moses joined that elite group, but with revelation comes expectation. For the most part, they obeyed. Now Moses is expected to obey as well. (John 14:23)

⁴ *I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners.* What Moses is about to do is connected with that earlier covenant made with his forefathers. (Genesis 15:7) God cannot lie. He is there in the past, present with Moses, and there in the fulfillment. God isn't going to let Moses down, even if Moses does doubt and fear. God can't let him down, because it is about fulfilling the promises He has made. This deliverance is going to happen! (Jeremiah 1:12) These are all reasons for Moses to have faith. He's the Lord.

Commented [notes6]: Romans 5:3-5 (ESV)
3 More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,
4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,
5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Commented [notes7]: Hebrews 11:39-40 (ESV)
39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised,
40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Commented [notes12]: Exodus 34:6 (ESV)
6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

Commented [notes8]: 2 Corinthians 4:18 (ESV)
18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Commented [notes13]: John 14:23 (ESV)
23 Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Commented [notes9]: Numbers 23:19 (ESV)
19 God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

Commented [notes10]: Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)
10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Commented [notes14]: Genesis 15:7 (ESV)
7 And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess."

Commented [notes11]: Romans 8:28 (ESV)
28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Commented [notes15]: Jeremiah 1:12 (ESV)
12 Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it."

He appeared to them. He made promises.

⁵ Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. This is now the third time God has told Moses that He has heard their groaning. Perhaps this time there is implied the additional groaning of the new burden of gathering the straw. If the groaning was heard before, the increased groaning must be heard even more. God remembers the covenant with Abraham, the promise to bring them out after 400 years. (Genesis 15:13-14)

Though most of this was said before in chapter 3, now, in the midst of the trial, Moses needed to be reminded. Don't we need a reminder of things we already know when we react to trials with fear? (Romans 15:16) Sometimes we just need someone to speak those old familiar verses to us to help us get our eyes off the problems and on to the truth of God's word. Don't feel you are being condescending when you remind someone of a verse they already know by heart. We all need an occasional reminder.

Moses then received his next instructions. The instruction is to speak again to the Israelites. It is a series of "I will..." declarations framed with "I am the LORD!"

⁶ Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. God wants the people to understand what He is trying to get Moses to understand. **God does**

what He does because of who He is. We can believe Him no matter how things appear because He is the eternal One. (Revelation 22:12-13)

So first, Moses must again proclaim that God is the Eternal One, and then the vow of God to bring them out, deliver them and redeem them. This is full of Gospel connotations. The Hebrews heard it as freedom from the burden of slavery. How? It will be by God's outstretched arm.

This is one of the many places when God is speaking on multiple levels. There is what the people hear. There is the reality of its fullness in their lives both physically and spiritually, and there is the greater truth to which the Old Testament shadows point. (Hebrews 10:1)

A slavery greater than that of Egypt began in Genesis chapter three. Jesus called it slavery to sin. (John 8:34) He said that anyone who commits sin is enslaved by sin. That's all of us, just in case you weren't sure. That enslavement means we need redemption and deliverance. How did God say He would do that? It's with His outstretched arm. And who did Isaiah say was the arm of the Lord? He is the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. *"Who has believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed. He grew up before Him as tender shoot..."* and later in the song, *"he shall bear their iniquities"* and *"he bore the sin of many."* Isaiah 53:1, 11d, 12c Jesus alone delivers us from enslavement to sin.

He is the eternal God. He has the big picture in mind, the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant to bless the world, not just Israel. (Genesis 12:3) God has a greater cry in His ears, and greater

Commented [notes18]: Revelation 22:12-13 (ESV)
12 "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Commented [notes16]: Genesis 15:13-14 (ESV)
13 Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.
14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions."

Commented [notes19]: Hebrews 10:1 (ESV)
1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Commented [notes17]: Romans 15:15 (NIV)
15 I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me

Commented [notes20]: John 8:34 (ESV)
34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin."

Commented [notes21]: Genesis 12:3 (ESV)
3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

deliverance in mind, the cross of Jesus. (Revelation 13:8)

God continued, *⁷ I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.* God was making them a special group of people, His own, adopting them. When it all came to pass, they were to solidify the reality of who God is in their hearts and minds. Notice that God speaks as if taking them out is inevitable because of His eternal perspective. (Ezekiel 12:25)

The New Covenant application for us is that God has made us a part of the family of God. He has adopted us and grafted us into the trunk of these ancestors of faith. (Romans 11:19-20) He has become our God and we are His people. The burden of guilt and of fitting in with the world has been lifted off our shoulders. We should know that He is the eternal God. That should affect the way we see every trial and difficulty, good times and bad.

God summed it up with this, *⁸ I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.* " The final "I wills" are to bring them into the Land of Promise and give it to them. He brings us out to bring us in. We aren't meant to die in the wilderness. Then, for the fourth time in this short declaration, God said, *"I am the LORD!"* If He says it, that settles it.

The first hint of trouble and the Israelites will utterly contradict what God has told them they need to fix in their hearts and minds. They'll start whining about being brought into the

desert to die because there wasn't enough room in Egypt to bury them. (Exodus 14:11) Can you believe it?

I can, because I look at how I act when the heat is on. Burdens start to pile up. God allows them to refine me and test my faith, and I start whining like the Israelites.

Did He not deliver us? Does He not remind us that He is the LORD, the eternal One? Was our redemption possible any other way? Then why didn't we get in our hearts and minds that He is the LORD? The fact that I'm whining shows I missed the lesson. If I got the lesson, I would be praising God in every circumstance because He promised to use it all for my good. (1Thessalonians 5:18) He promised to refine my character. He promised to get me ready for heaven. (James 1:3-4)

If God can redeem my soul and bring me out from under the burden of the world, then I should know that He can take care of any other situation in life! I should know He is the LORD, YHWH, the eternal One, who is mighty to save! I should be laughing and singing not whining and moaning. (James 1:2) Amen?

Let's go over these "I wills" that are not only for them, but for all that God calls. I will bring you out the world system, deliver you from enslavement to sin, redeem you from the enemy of your soul, make you my own child, be your God, bring you in to the family of God, and give you heaven. What promises! He is the LORD. *⁹ Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, (and they praised God again! NO?) but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.* What a sad verse. Their spirits were so

Commented [notes22]: Revelation 13:7-8 (ESV)
7 Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,
8 and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain.

Commented [notes25]: Exodus 14:11 (ESV)
11 They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt?"

Commented [notes23]: Ezekiel 12:25 (ESV)
25 For I am the LORD; I will speak the word that I will speak, and it will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, but in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it, declares the Lord GOD."

Commented [notes26]: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (ESV)
18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Commented [notes24]: Romans 11:19-20 (ESV)
19 Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."
20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe.

Commented [notes27]: James 1:3-4 (ESV)
3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.
4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Commented [notes28]: James 1:2 (ESV)
2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

broken by Pharaoh, that they dared not have any hope. Sometimes the world can be so difficult, and sin can be so destructive, that we just give up. But that does not mean that God gives up on us! (2Timothy 2:13) He already said "I will". And brothers and sisters, He already said what He will do in us. Remember, He is the LORD! Don't forget the implications!

God sent Moses back to Pharaoh to make the demand again. ¹² *But Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?"* The broken spirit of the people had settled in on Moses as well. He reverted to his old excuse. He didn't want to bear the blame for increased hardship. Moses still didn't understand why God wants to use the ones who know they can't do it. He still hasn't learned that excuses just encourage God to use you. (1Corinthians 1:26-29)

The next verse looks forward to the pep talk God has in the next chapter with Moses and Aaron. ¹³ *But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge about the people of Israel and about Pharaoh king of Egypt: to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.* It is mostly a repetition of the talk they already had. God already dealt with Moses' excuses. He already told him it was going to be an effort and take time. He already told him the eventual outcome. He just needed a reminder, like most of us occasionally do.

The rest of this chapter is the family tree of Moses and Aaron, so we know exactly who these people are. Lineage was especially important to the Hebrews because of the promises to Abraham to bless his descendents.

(Genesis 18:17-18) It has winners and losers, people of great faith and power-hungry politicians. It has names like Baldy and Clumsy, as well as heroic names like Great Expectations. People just like us. God knows our names but the point of the chapter is that He calls us all to know His. When He says He is the LORD, He wants us to grab hold of all that means for our lives. He wants to infuse our daily life with faith and confidence, with trust and peace. He is the LORD!

Questions:

- 1 Why was it necessary for to begin with such resistance?
- 2 How does difficulty help us mature?
- 3 What should, "I am the Lord" say to Moses? and to us?
- 4 How should we look at the seeming setbacks of life?
- 5 How can people see what we really believe about God?
- 6 Why do we need to be reminded of what we already know?
- 7 Who is the outstretched arm of the Lord?
- 8 Go over the "I wills" and relate to today?
- 9 What can make the difference between praising and whining?
- 10 Do you live like He is the LORD?

Commented [notes31]: Genesis 18:17-18 (ESV)
17 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,
18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"

Commented [notes29]: 2 Timothy 2:13 (ESV)
13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.

Commented [notes30]: 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (ESV)
26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.
27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;
28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,
29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.