

The Lord's Will Done

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[0 : 00] So in this fourth chapter of Exodus, we have the continuing conversation between Moses and the Lord. The Lord, remember, as we saw in chapter 3, appeared to him in the burning bush, the flame of fire, and gave him great news that he had surely seen the affliction of his people.

He was going to burn them out. And you can just imagine Moses saying, great, yes, okay, wonderful. And then he said, come now therefore, verse 10 of chapter 3, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. And then we have all the excuses and the fear and the trembling and all that is being offered by way of mitigation and backing out on Moses' part.

And perhaps that's understandable because what we see in this passage, verses 1 to 17, remembering, of course, that in the original there wouldn't be chapters and verses. It's just a continuous narrative in the original Hebrew manuscripts. But if we can use the benefit of the chapters and verses before us, in verses 1 to 9 we see, for example, Moses continuing an ongoing fear.

[1 : 12] And we see it in verse 10, his doubt. And we see throughout, especially in verse 15, his resistance. I think it's part of verse 13, his resistance. And how he doesn't want to be sent.

Finally, we have implied, and as we would carry on in the chapter, we see his resignation, his willingness finally to submit to the Lord. And eventually, of course, it always comes down to that with us.

Whether with Moses or with anyone else, we can argue, we can resist, we can fight against him, but ultimately we have to submit to the Lord because he's stronger than us.

And if he is stronger than us, we have every reason to hope and believe. If he's stronger than us, he's stronger than our enemies too. He is stronger than those against whom he sends us. He is stronger than all the challenges and all the problems and the difficulties that he calls us to face. But we have, first of all, then, this fear that Moses has. And that fear is very human. And perhaps we might even say it's very well grounded because there's lots of good human reasons why Moses thinks he doesn't stand a chance.

[2 : 20] He's not going to have any success. Moses answered and said, But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto thy voice. For they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto me.

Even if I give unto her name, I am that I am. Even if I say, The God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has appeared to me. And I'm saying, Well, what's his name? And, well, if he's really willing, Why are we still in bondage?

Why all these bad things happen to us? And why hasn't he appeared before now, after 400 years? And so on. And all these things. They won't believe me. They didn't believe him when he was a prince of Egypt.

When he killed the Egyptian and delivered one of his own Hebrew brethren out of the hands of the oppressor. They didn't believe him then. So why would they believe him now, 40 years after he's disappeared?

From anybody's recollection. Of course, you know what it's like when somebody disappears. Of course, out of visual contact for a long time. You know, if somebody, for example, leaves the island, let's say when they're young, And they go off to Glasgow or somewhere else in the mainland.

[3 : 24] And they live their life. And they earn their living. And so on. And then at the very end. And they die. And they're brought back here to be buried. There will be those who remember them from 40 or 50 years before when they were young.

To whom they will still be in their own mind. That young person they knew. And they'll be there at the funeral or at the wakes or whatever. And they will be remembering that person.

And they will be a real live memory. But there will be others who have been born since they went. For whom they don't really know who this person was. And they don't form a part of their life or their memory or whatever.

And with all the respect and love in the world, they just can't place that person in the context of their own lives. Now if that's the case in our own island, then that would be the case also in a place like Egypt.

Where this prince of Egypt who was raised up from the Hebrews. And who had all the benefits of education. They would have heard of how he was exiled and how he disappeared. But for so many who had been born in the previous 40 years.

[4 : 25] It would be something that was just like a story. And if this strange person appears out of the wilderness. And then says the Lord God has appeared to me. And I'll think, well okay, right, fair enough.

But you know, who are you? And who is he? And how are we to know? So Moses has some justification for these fears and anxieties. They'll just say the Lord has not appeared to me. They won't believe me. And the Lord said unto him, what is that in my hand? And he said, the Lord. Now God isn't asking this because he doesn't know the staff that he's got in his hand. But rather he's drawing Moses' attention to the thing that he holds. Because he wants him to focus upon it and to see how it changes. So that he doesn't suddenly think, oh a snake suddenly got up into my hand or taken hold of my rod.

No, he's looking at the rod first to recognize and see it is the same rod. That he can identify it before the Lord changes it. So that he can see it is God who has done this.

[5 : 20] What is that in my hand? He said, the rod. He said, cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground and it became a serpent. And Moses fled from before it. Now it's not a hallucination.

It's not just he thinks he's seeing a serpent because of the heat or dehydration or whatever it may be. No, it's a genuine living serpent. God is demonstrating that just as he made all the creatures of the earth on a fourth, fifth and sixth days and so on, out of nothing by his very word, he can create a serpent out of a rod of wood, out of a shepherd's creek.

He can do it easily, instantaneously. He can do it just like he did at the beginning. Moses fled from before it. So it's a real live snake and clearly it's in a threatening mode because Moses runs it.

He would have seen serpents in the desert before. The desert would have had plenty of serpents here and there under rocks and so on. But this one clearly is right there and menacing in front of him.

So he flees from it. And then his faith is tested. The Lord said unto Moses, put forth thine hand and take it by the tail. Now, some of you will be aware that if you're going to actually grab a snake anywhere, you try and grab it by the neck and hold it at arm's length so it can't actually get at you with its fangs or with its poison or whatever.

[6 : 45] And then you try and turn its head away. The last thing you do is hold it by its tail because then its full length has the opportunity to turn around and either bite you or spit its poison or do whatever it does.

Holding it by the tail is the most dangerous thing you can do with a snake. But that is what Moses is commanded to do. And so it's an act of faith.

So when he's told to do that, it is God that's telling him to do it and to trust him as he does so. And Moses, you know, to his credit, he put forth his hand and caught it and it became a rod in his hand. That they may believe, the Lord says, that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob hath appeared unto them. So in other words, you see, whatever your weakness, whatever you think they won't believe, it's not about you, it's about me and what I can do.

I'll be there showing these signs. And this, remember, is the first instance when the Lord later uses the signs and wonders when Aaron and Moses go to the children of Israel and demonstrate these signs.

[7 : 52] This is the first use, as far as we can ascertain in scripture, of signs and wonders used by an individual at God's command. Of course, the Lord does miracles throughout Genesis.

Of course, you know, sending up fire and brimstone and Sodom and Gomorrah and sending the angels to remember Lot and his daughters and all the other miraculous deliverances. Like Abraham is, what, 300 servants or whatever, being able to beat all the armies of the kings in a single night.

It's like a huge, long route march to go to where they were. God gives great victories. God works miraculous things. Sarah having a child, which is like 90 years old, and Abraham becoming a father, 100 years old, and all the ways in which God answers the prayers of his people.

But that is God doing it without any, if you like, instrument in his hand. Whereas this is now going to become the first use of signs and wonders in the hand of one being used of God to exercise them. God actually, as we've mentioned many times in the past, doesn't actually make extensive use of signs and wonders in his dealings with his people.

[9 : 05] We tend to think that the Bible is just chock-a-block with miraculous happenings and signs and wonders and all these spectacular things that could never happen nowadays. But of course, they happen in Bible times.

When in fact, in all the like 4,000 years that the biblical record covers, there are in fact, as we've mentioned in the past, only three real periods when signs and wonders are actually used and exercised by the Lord through people.

And these are Moses and Joshua, the Exodus and the conquest of the promised land, Elijah and Elisha, and then Christ and the apostles.

And if you think about it, all the other times in between, the Lord is, yes, answering the prayers of his people and helping them through their problems, their challenges, their battles, and so on. Now, he is a living reality in the lives of his people.

But we don't see individuals working signs and wonders other than in these three areas of Bible history, which is pretty rare, really, when you consider the vast amount of time that he's covered.

[10 : 12] Most of the time, the Lord works by ordinary means with ordinary people. Yes, he's spiritually involved in their lives. Yes, he does miraculous things and works miraculous deliverances.

But he doesn't give to individuals the power to do signs and wonders other than in these three periods of salvation history. So, here we have Moses then taking the serpent.

It comes a rod again in his hand that they may believe the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. So, Moses' fears are there.

The Lord said, furthermore unto him, put now thy hand unto thy bosom. And he put his hand unto his bosom. When he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. Now, this was the worst possible disease you could get in ancient times.

Because leprosy was a living death. There was no cure. There was no way of treating it. There was nothing that could be done. Some people did recover from it.

[11 : 13] We mentioned this morning about Simon the leper, who had become a fantasy, who welcomed Jesus into his home when the woman poured the ointment and washed his feet with her tears and so on.

So, he clearly had been a leper, but had somehow been cured or healed or whatever. But there was no known fail-safe cure for leprosy. And it was contagious.

It was a spreading disease. We now know, of course, a lot more about it than people knew then.

And that it was a disease of the nerve endings and that which meant you didn't feel pain.

So, your digits and your arms and legs got worn away simply by being damaged through not being able to be controlled over what you did with them and so on.

But the effect is a whitening, deadening of the skin of the nerve endings and it was a living death. People were so terrified of it that they banished people outside of their communities, their homes, their camps.

[12 : 13] And indeed, that's what God instructed his people later on with the lepers. Not to kill them, not to chase them away, but they had to dwell beyond the camp. And people would no doubt come and leave food at a safe distance or other things for family members or men, then withdraw so the lepers would come and get it and then be fed and provided for.

But they weren't allowed contact with other people. It was the worst illness you could get. And suddenly here is Moses, takes his hand out and it's covered in leprosy.

Must have been absolutely terrifying. But this is to demonstrate that God has the power over all nature of disease, of illness, of the infliction.

And Moses puts his hand back and goes and moves him again. And it was turned again as his other flesh, verse 7. And to heal, to kill and to make alive, to inflict and to cure.

That God has this power at his fingertips. That there is that which the Lord can do, which men cannot do. And therefore, if they won't believe the first sign, they'll believe the second sign. [13:20] Because it will be so convincing. And we have to recognize this is not just an illusion. It's not just the appearance of leprosy. It is genuinely leprosy.

His hand is covered in leprosy. And there it is healed and cured. If they will not believe the voice of the first sign, they'll believe the latter sign. And it came to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river and pour it upon the dry land.

And the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. Now, if anything, this is slightly, unless we explain it in the future terms of the plague of blood, it's a difficult one to sort of put in its context here.

Because pouring water on the ground, on the dusty earth, and then saying, oh yeah, now it's become blood. Now, it's going to be harder to discern that it's blood on the ground as opposed to just water.

And, you know, you're going to pick it up and taste it. It's more difficult to see that sign clearly than it is to see the other two. Why that should be the final convincing one is not clear, except perhaps if we understand in terms of that the water of the river Nile is what made the difference between life and death for the land of Egypt.

[14:42] The blood that flows through our bodies. And the Lord said time and again that the blood is the life of it all. So if the life is poured out, I can take the life out of the river and turn it into blood.

And I can bring death just as readily as I give life. That this would be a sign to them in terms of supposing your life force for the Egyptians.

The river Nile, which is the water that makes the difference between, you know, starvation and famine and drought on the one hand, or a lush, well-provided full kingdom on the other.

If that is itself turned to blood, then what chance do you have? You are only dependent on the grace and the goodness of God. That the water shall become blood upon the dry land.

It's difficult, as we say, as a sign in and of itself to see. This is the most convincing one of all. And I think we have to recognise its spiritual implications, and its practical implications if water is turned into blood.

[15:47] Moses said unto the Lord then, O my Lord, I am not eloquent. Now we've got, having had the fear, and God has overcome the fear with a demonstration of his power, now Moses has the doubt.

I am not eloquent, neither here to form, nor since thou hast spoken and play sound, but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue. And this is, of course, his plea.

This is his anxiety. And the Lord reminds him, Now this is a theme which we find repeated throughout Scripture, particularly into the New Testament, where it is the same consistency.

Those who have no eloquence or strength or power of their own, the Lord gives them it. And we might be surprised that perhaps the Lord doesn't maybe do a kind of Isaiah vision.

Remember Isaiah chapter 6, and they knew that King Uzziah died when he sees the Lord in his throne, high and lifted up, and he says, Why doesn't God just do that for Moses?

[17:08] Why doesn't he just make him eloquent? Why doesn't he just take a live coal from off the altar, give him this heavenly vision, and then he can suddenly pour forth all the eloquence in the world? Wouldn't that be better?

But rather the Lord's desire throughout is that the glory should be his, and that his servants should be enabled to recognize that the power of the eloquence is not of them, but rather it is of him.

This is what we find Jesus, for example, teaching to his disciples. In Matthew chapter 10, verses 19 and 20, we read, But when they deliver you up, Jesus said, Take no thought how or what he shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what he shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which is in you. And then it will be clear to you disciples that you can't just, you know, speak before these synagogues and rulers and so on, because you're clever people.

Because right up until that hour, you will be of standing lips and no eloquence and so on, but then the Lord will give you in that same hour what you need to speak, because it's not you that speak, it is the Holy Ghost speaking through you.

[18 : 25] Again, in Luke chapter 21, in words that really echo what the Lord says to Moses, we have verses 14 and 15, Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gain, say nor resist.

I will give you a mouth and wisdom. And the Lord says, you know, now therefore go and I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say. So it's almost a direct reference to the Lord speaking to Moses.

We have other instances, you know, for example, in 2 Corinthians, in chapter 10, at verse 10, where Paul is very conscious of his lack of eloquence.

2 Corinthians 10, verse 10, His letters say they are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible. Someone of such contemptible speech and lack of eloquence, in contrast to someone like Apollos, for example, who clearly was a gifted auditor and rich in human eloquence, Paul, by contrast, was not.

He was unimpressive in the flesh and his speech is contemptible, he says, but look at what Paul achieved, not in his own strength, but rather in the strength of the Lord.

[19 : 51] Again, the disciples, when they appear before the Sanhedrin, before the Jewish leaders and councils, Acts chapter 4, verse 13, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

And beholding the man which was healed, standing with them, they could say nothing against it. A miracle had taken place and these men were now holding forth eloquently. They knew, had not learned at the feet of any rabbi.

They knew they hadn't been, you know, instructed with the scriptures and with knowledge and with how to present their arguments, but they're eloquence. They were the boldness of Peter and John. They're unlearned and ignorant men. They marveled and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Because we see, if we go back to verse 8 in Acts chapter 4, that it was Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, who said unto them, ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, and so on.

It is him, therefore, who is able to speak because this is the work of the Lord. It is not the work of men.

[21 : 07] So, we have the Lord answering this question, answering this anxiety, giving a mouth to Moses, answering his doubts. And of course, Moses is not done.

He doesn't really want this commission and he said, Lord, send by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And that's not a statement of resignation. Lord, if you want to send me, then of course I'll go. Rather than send you, send whoever you like, Lord, just don't send me. Send somebody else. Send anyone you want. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses.

And he said, is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee. The anger of the Lord is kindled against Moses. Why? Because Moses is doubting what the Lord has said in chapter 3, verse 17.

And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt. Now remember, God is an eternal being. Past, present, and future are all one to him.

[22 : 07] So if God has said, it is the equivalent of it coming to pass. The fact that maybe the wheel hasn't turned, the clock hasn't turned enough to actually bring it to pass, but it is there.

It is already a fait accompli. It's already done because God has said it. Verse 17 of chapter 3. And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt.

If Moses is doubting that divine command, that divine word, then it is reason for the Lord to have his anger kindled against him. But, instead of simply saying, well, stop you then, Moses.

If you don't want it, I'll give it to somebody better. Aaron, he's already in Egypt. I'll use him instead of you because he can speak. I know he can speak well, but instead, what does the Lord do? He says, Aaron, your brother, he can speak.

I'm bringing him to you and you're going to tell him all the things I've told you. And he can speak well and he can put it eloquently to the Israelites and to Pharaoh and you will be to him instead of God.

[23 : 05] Now, that doesn't mean that he's a divine being to be worshipped. It means that Aaron, although he can communicate well what comes from the Lord, the Lord is not giving his divine

messages directly to Aaron.

He is giving them to Moses. Moses is to give them to Aaron and Aaron will translate into eloquence that which is to be stated to Pharaoh and to the people. So, he will be to thee instead of a mouth and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

And you might think, well, it seems a bit of a roundabout way to do things. Surely, it would be easier to cut to the chase. Either make Moses eloquent or just use Aaron since he's already there.

But, as you know, the Lord points out elsewhere in 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 18, he said, Now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased him.

Remember that the church of God does not begin simply with Pentecost, with the pouring out of the Spirit on the apostles. The church of God is from the beginning of time.

[24 : 09] It is the Lord's people in every age. And the church of God exists in the Old Testament. The Lord's people, they are the covenant line and those who truly love and worship the Lord and are his.

He gives them his Spirit, he keeps them in faithfulness and so on. And for much of salvation history, they are very, very few. Maybe only one single family in all the nations of the world.

One family. Think of that. Sometimes it might only be one individual or his great-grandfather as well who might still be alive. It is down to so few you might think the light is about to be snuffed out but the Lord keeps that witness alive.

And so when Paul talks about the church of God as one body in 1 Corinthians, he's simply expounding that which has been the case all through salvation history.

So verse 18 in 1 Corinthians 12, Now God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased them. If they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.

[25 : 14] The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee. And they much more. Those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary.

Those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary. Moses seems to be more feeble than Aaron. But God intends to use the feeble and the meek to glorify his name. It is precisely because Moses does not have great power and eloquence and natural authority that God is at last able to use him.

Had he done so when he was still a prince of Egypt, then one might have been forgiven for thinking, oh, it's because he's got all these advantages. It's because he has been raised up to loyal power and natural authority and dignity.

That's why he's able to lead the people. But no, it's none of these things. These things were of use to him, no doubt. But they were not the reason that he was able to lead the children of Israel out of slavery.

[26 : 19] It was the Lord. So there is this resistance which God overcomes. Thou shalt take this rod in thine hand wherewith thou shalt do signs.

And if we were to read on to verse 18, we would read, And Moses went and returned to Jethro's father-in-law, said, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren, which are in Egypt.

There is finally this resignation. After the resistance, there is resignation and an acceptance that he cannot go against God. And for all that we may be inclined to resist God's plans for our lives, eventually, we must either succumb and submit to them or else walk away from the Lord altogether. And that is eternally disastrous for our souls. Somewhere along the line, eventually, we must submit. We find this, of course, in the book of Esther, where Esther is not keen to speak to the king on behalf of the Jews.

She's all right, thanks very much, in the court. She doesn't really want to risk everything. But, of course, Mordecai speaks to her and says, You won't escape. If they start slaughtering the Jews, you will not be spared.

[27 : 29] And who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Then Esther made them return Mordecai's answer. Go gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan.

And fast ye for me and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I also, my maidens, will fast likewise. And so will I go in unto the king which is not according to the law.

And if I perish, I perish. Here's the resignation. Here's the submission to the Lord's will. And finally, Moses obviously submits and thinks, Well, if I'm going to die, you've got to die or something. You might as well die doing the Lord's will. If I perish, I perish. There is that resignation. So we have the fear, the doubt, the resistance, and finally the resignation.

But of course, this section, this chapter, this Bible, is not ultimately about Moses. Nor at this stage is about any individual.

[28 : 26] It is always ultimately about the Lord. and what we see here is the Lord's intention to deliver his people out of Egypt.

It's not just a good idea that Moses has while he's away in the desert saying, I know, I think I'll go back into Egypt and talk to Pharaoh and just leave the Hebrews out of this.

It's not Moses' idea. It's not his plan. He doesn't want anything to do with it. This is all about the Lord. It is all about God's time, about God's purpose, about God's deliverance, about God's plans for his people, about God unworking in his gracious plan of mercy and salvation for the people he has chosen.

Not because they deserve it, but because he is gracious. And so we have the Lord here now in this section. We've looked at Moses and his fear and his doubt and his resistance and finally his resignation.

I want us to look at what the Lord demonstrates now in his dealing with Moses. First of all, we've got to recognize that Moses' resistance and his fears and so on.

[29 : 33] The Lord could have had his anger kindled against him right away. But instead, he shows to him a fatherly patience. That's the first thing the Lord does, a fatherly patience.

When Moses has fears, the Lord says, okay, well this is what I'm going to show you. Throw your staff on the ground and look at the comes of a serpent. Take the serpent, now it's back to our Lord again. I'm demonstrating my power here.

I'm showing you that I can do this. Even if you can't, I can do it. You don't have to worry, Moses, about not being eloquent, not being strong, not being powerful because at the end of the day, it's not about you, it's about me.

Because the Lord has chosen to deal with Moses, he recognizes that Moses is a work in progress and he has to take time with him and he has to demonstrate things to him.

And so there is a fatherly patience with Moses and just as any parent, if a child continues obstinate and disobedient, eventually the parental anger will flare up and we see that a little later on.

[30 : 39] The anger of the Lord was kindled against him but first of all, he demonstrates fatherly patience with him because Moses' initial objections or explanations saying, well they won't believe me, they're not going to believe me before, they're not going to believe me now.

He says, well look, look what I'm going to do. Look at the rod in your hand, look at the hand inside your coat and then bring it out again and so on. The fatherly patience. And in the context of that fatherly patience, we also see demonstration of divine power.

It is not Moses who turns the rod into a serpent and back again. It is God. divine power. It is not Moses who gives himself leprosy and then miraculously cures it.

It is God. Divine power. It is not the Lord who says, it is not Moses who when he gets into Egypt is going to be able to pour the water on the ground and turn it into blood.

It is God. All the plagues of Egypt are the work of God, not the work of Moses. It is about divine power and he is showing Moses a little glimpse of his divine power that although Moses doesn't have any strength of himself, the Lord has all the strength that anyone is going to need.

[31 : 58] That is something that maybe we, as those who seek to follow him or his children, we need perhaps to relearn that although we don't have any strength, the Lord has all the divine power in heaven and earth.

There is fatherly patience and there is divine power. That is what he demonstrates for Moses' benefit so that Moses will be convinced that he will know that the God of whom he speaks is not just an idea from the mind or memory of the patriarchs.

It is rather a living, divine, powerful presence which has appeared to him, spoken to him and worked these mighty signs and wonders. Divine power.

Thirdly, we also have the human help. The Lord could easily, as we say, simply have made Moses eloquent or simply chosen to use Aaron by himself but instead he sends Aaron to Moses.

He's going to do that. Excuse me. If we were to read on, we'd see how in verse 27 the Lord moves Aaron to go into the wilderness and to seek out Moses.

[33 : 06] So he gives him human help and we all have need of human help. We are called to be a family of the Lord's people. Whatever may be our particular domestic status, we have a family in the Lord's people.

We have brothers and sisters in Christ. We have mothers and fathers in Israel. We have sons and daughters in Zion. We have a family worldwide in the Lord's people and the Lord provides for us human help.

That is why right at the outset when the Lord brought all the creatures to Adam or whatever he named them then that was what their names were but for Adam there was not found anyone who was a suitable help and so that's why the Lord made the woman.

That is why he instituted marriage right at the beginning as a human help one for another and so the Lord provides not marriage Moses already brought that but in this divine mission he provides human help in the form of his brother and that is something of course we all have need of because as we mentioned in Corinthians we are all part of one body and the Lord gives us not only for companionship but for the strengthening of one another.

When one is cast down the other will bear them up. Ecclesiastes I think it is that tells you two are better than one because if one falls the other will bear him up and a threefold cord is not swiftly broken.

[34 : 36] So he provides human help. Aaron can speak well I know that he can speak well he cometh forth to meet me when he sees thee he will be glad in his heart he's not going to come to you and say Lord what am I doing out here in the wilderness how come you drag me all the way out here why aren't you just obeying the Lord and doing what he says I'd rather go back to my own family you don't think thanks very much no when he sees you he will be glad in his heart hasn't seen you for 40 years he wants to see you again and he can speak eloquently why?

because the Lord has given him that gift that he hasn't given to Moses and why also just perhaps a little aside here in brackets it's not written in the text of scripture but perhaps we must understand it to be there how does the Lord know that Aaron can speak well and of course go on to say because the Lord knows everything yes okay but there must be more to it than this perhaps we might be legitimate right insane because Aaron speaks to the Lord a lot because Aaron makes time for the Lord you could say that's conjecture it's not written in the scripture it's pure speculation but the Lord knows Aaron can speak well and Aaron can speak well of the divine power Aaron can speak well of the Lord why would that be the case?

I would suggest to you because over these past 40 years Aaron has made a practice of speaking to the Lord of spending time with the Lord why do you suppose it is that Aaron is chosen as the first chief priest over the high priest over the whole of Israel and not Moses why doesn't Moses become a king priest like Melchizedek?

no Moses is to become head of the civil power if we can say it that way and Aaron to become head of the spiritual power because this would appear to be God's chosen instrument as a man of God who can speak well and the Lord knows he can speak well because he speaks to God he makes time to speak to God he is a man we must assume of prayer and devotion and of contact and of interaction with the Lord and what about thy brother Moses the Levite brother Aaron the Levite thy brother I know that he can speak well and also behold he cometh forth to meet you when he seeth thee he will be glad in his heart human help we don't all have the same gifts some of us are better at one thing some of us are better at other things now as most of you will be aware I've just been at the General Assembly this past week some people can speak brilliantly at the General Assembly and everybody will clap and drum their feet and so on but it doesn't mean that what they're coming out with will necessarily be passed and other people may be brilliant at imagining great visions and ideas and so on but just as a wee aside the Assembly put me on a committee this past week the Committee on

Examination of Records the most exciting committee in the world and as you can imagine that means you've got to go through the books and records of presbyteries and boards and committees and you've got to see whether they've filled and everything correctly whether they've signed and dated and initialed and so on all this stuff and it's not the most exciting work in the world but it is necessary and the people who are the most eloquent in speech and the most visionary in their imagination are not necessarily those who will keep their books in the best order and the church

has need of accurate records it has need of accurate attention to laws and regulations and details just as it has need of visionaries and of eloquent speakers and of those who can be movers and shakers and so on but when it comes to keeping your records you want a certain kind of gifting you want those who will be precise those who will be picky those who will make sure all the I's are dotted and the T's are crossed so they go look there yep everything's there tick tick tick tick nice easy one close a bit yep that one's sorted and these are the people which are the committee like that

[38 : 51] I would just love it doesn't mean that they'd be the most exciting people in the assembly it doesn't mean that they'd be the most visionary people in the church but for this particular aspect of the church's work they would be the most gifted for that aspect of it you know there's all these different things that we have in our society which we don't think of as glamorous or good can you just imagine if your rubbish wasn't collected for months on end if all the bins piled up or if nobody came to empty your septic tank whatever you know all these unpleasant jobs but if they weren't done think of the state our lives would be in if we didn't have those who worked the water made sure that we had water in our taps if we didn't have all these necessary but unglamorous jobs were not done just like the body of Christ there's need for all these different gifts there is human help that the Lord provides and finally what God gives also is this unalterable command there is the fatherly patience divine power human help but this unalterable command because God does not say okay fair enough you've moaned and groaned enough so forget it

I've changed my mind I'm not going to take them out of Egypt or I'm going to use somebody else I'm not going to use you no it's an unalterable command I am going to bring them out of Egypt and Moses you are going to do it whether you like it or not it is an unalterable command and for us the unalterable command if we are to come out of our spiritual bondage in the spiritual Egypt of sin and unbelief the unalterable command is as Peter and John make clear to the Jewish leaders in their day going back to Acts 4 verse 12 neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved God is never going to alter that command he is never no matter how politically correct it is he is never going to say well actually all these other religions they are just as valid as that of my son Jesus actually yeah you know I want to be broad minded I want to be inclusive so I'm going to say yeah Buddhism

Islam Hinduism no more in fact human philosophy atheism come on everybody just come in and say no this is not something in which God is going to change his mind because the Lord is not a man that changes his mind or repents or lies or whatever it is an unalterable command there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved repent and believe the gospel that's the command Jesus gives in Mark chapter 1 at the outset of his ministry the kingdom of heaven is at hand repent and believe the gospel and there is no other way we can be saved except through the Lord Jesus Christ other religions are not the same because they are man made inventions Christ is the divine power the power of God and for salvation that has never changed from the beginning of history until now all the sacrifices of the Old Testament were sacrifices pointing to Christ all the priesthood of Aaron and all the priests down through all the centuries were a priesthood pointing to the ultimate priesthood of Christ all the kingships all the prophets pointing to the fulfillment in Christ he is the one who fulfills all the requirements of his heavenly father there is no salvation in any other name there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved we don't have to come out of a physical Egypt but we do have to come out of a spiritual bondage if we are as yet unbelieving or uncommitting of ourselves to Christ you and I we are like Moses stammering stuttering conscious of our limitations and how I can't do this

I can't do that I can't do the next thing call somebody else Lord God is not going to change his mind he is inviting he is calling we must either submit to his will or walk away and believe you me the very worst thing you can ever do in your entire life is walk away from the Lord God calls through Moses through Aaron through the prophets and ultimately through Christ and his gospel for the last two thousand years he calls he invites and he says come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden it's time to come out of evil there is a promised land ahead of you and even if it must be in a wilderness for a while that you come and worship the Lord on a certain mountain then it's better to be free in the wilderness than to be in bondage in Egypt although so many people think the opposite this is an unalterable command and when the Lord gives an unalterable command there is nothing for his true servants and children to do but to obey we may come kicking and screaming or

we may come willingly and submissively but eventually we will come if we are his that is his invitation that is his unalterable command thanks ■■ ■■ge to the son of his taking us to the shall keep on through m and ahead thank you