

EXODUS 4

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

Exodus 4:1–31

God Sends Moses and Aaron to Egypt

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

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Links to the [word-by-word](#), [verse-by-verse](#) studies of **Exodus** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) (that is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Exodus. However, much of this material was thrown together without careful editing. Therefore, from time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined.

There is a second, less complete set of weekly lessons of Exodus ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). Every word of that study can be found in this word-by-word, verse-by-verse study.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better concept of our reason for being

here, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic sources, even though I believe that they are very wrong regarding Mary, the pope, apostolic succession and other such doctrines. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Exodus available anywhere.

Also, **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables**. They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available.

Preface: Exodus 4 is simply a continuation of Exodus 3. Moses is still out in the desert speaking to God. When God tells Moses what He wants him to do, Moses objects, eloquently arguing that he is too inarticulate to speak before Pharaoh and bring him God's message. God tells Moses that his brother is able to talk, so he will be the spokesman for Moses, who is the spokesman for God; and, oh by the way, Aaron is on his way right now to meet Moses.

Moses and Aaron meet, then go to the elders of the sons of Israel and convince them that God knows of their difficulties and that He has visited the sons of Israel.

The Bible Summary of Exodus 4 (in 140 characters or less): *The LORD gave Moses signs so that the people would listen. Moses was afraid, so the LORD sent his brother Aaron to speak for him.*¹

There are many **chapter commentaries** on the book of Exodus. This will be the most extensive examination of Exodus 4, where you will be able to examine in depth every word of the original text. Every attempt has been made to make this both a complete and self-contained study. Therefore, all references, vocabulary, and related concepts should be found within this extensive study. Easy access links to more in-depth studies of some vocabulary words, concepts and doctrines are also provided.

Quotations:

Outline of Chapter 4:

Introduction

vv. 1–9	God Gives Moses the Assets with Which to Speak to His People and to Pharaoh
vv. 10–17	God Allows Aaron to be His Spokesman Rather than Moses
vv. 18–23	Moses Leaves Midian, Receiving Final Instructions from God
vv. 24–26	Moses Faces the Sin unto Death Until His Second Son is Circumcised
vv. 27–31	Moses Meets with Aaron and They Travel to Egypt to Speak to the Hebrew Elders

Chapter Summary

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Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines:

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Introduction	Fundamental Questions About Exodus 4
Introduction	The Prequel of Exodus 4
Introduction	The Principals of Exodus 4
Introduction	The Places of Exodus 4

¹ From <http://www.biblesummary.info/exodus> accessed June 23, 2023.

Introduction	Timeline for Exodus 4
Introduction	A Synopsis of Exodus 4
Introduction	Outlines of Exodus 4 (Various Commentators)
Introduction	Synopsis of Exodus 4 from the Summarized Bible
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v. 24	The American English Bible on, <i>Did an Angel Want to Kill Moses?</i>
v. 26	Circumcision or Circumcisions?
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v. 26	Moses and his own personal knowledge about circumcision
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Summary	A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary
Summary	Why Exodus 4 is in the Word of God
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Summary	Shmoop Summary of Exodus 4
Summary	Edersheim Summarizes Exodus 4
Addendum	The Doctrine of Circumcision (by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)
Addendum	Josephus’ History of this Time Period
Addendum	A Complete Translation of Exodus 4
Addendum	Doctrinal Teachers Who Have Taught Exodus 4
Addendum	Word Cloud from a Reasonably Literal Paraphrase of Exodus 4
Addendum	Word Cloud from Exegesis of Exodus 4

Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines
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www.kukis.org	Exegetical Studies in Exodus

Doctrines Covered or Alluded To			
	Circumcision		
Additional doctrines and links are found in Definition of Terms below.			

Chapters of the Bible Alluded To and/or Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter
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Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Definition of Terms

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Every person with the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is considered to be a racial Jew. Abraham is considered to be the first Jew; and God made many promises to Abraham, most of which applied to the people who would come from him.

Abraham had two sons—Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael is a gentile (an Arab) and Isaac is a Jew (Hebrew). Isaac had twin sons: Jacob and Esau. Esau is a gentile (an Arab) while Jacob is a Jew. Technically, everyone descended from Jacob is a Jew.

The key is regeneration and foreknowledge. Many believe that Ishmael and Esau were both unbelievers. I disagree; I believe that both men believed in the Revealed God. However, they simply did not consistently pass down the heritage of that faith to their sons and grandsons. Despite their many failings, Jacob and his 12 sons consistently passed down this spiritual heritage. God knew who would and who would not.

Angelic Conflict

During human history, there is an invisible conflict being played out and tied to human history, which is call the *Angelic Conflict*. This began with the fall of Satan and has become integral to our own lives since Satan tempted the first woman to sin against God. The angels which fell with Satan are known as fallen angels or demons.

Fundamental to the Angelic Conflict is God's essence. God created man to resolve this conflict.

The two primary objectives of Satan with respect to man are (1) to keep people from believing in Jesus Christ and (2) to keep believers from growing spiritually and participating in the production of divine good. See the **Angelic Conflict** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Angel, Angels, Elect Angels, and Fallen Angels

Angels were living creatures created before man. They also have free will. Those who chose against God (or sinned against God) are fallen angels. They will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. Those who have never sinned against God and never rebelled against God are the *elect angels*. We do not know exactly what their future is, apart from them spending eternity with God. See the **Angelic Conflict** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Apologetics

This is the science which shows Christianity and the Bible to be logical and reasonable. I strongly recommend any of these books by Josh McDowell: [A Ready Defense](#), [Evidence for Jesus](#); [Evidence Which Demands a Verdict](#). There are many other excellent resources on apologetics.

Definition of Terms	
Bible Doctrine	Bible doctrine is the information found in the Old and New Testaments which God wants all believers to know. We live in the Church Age, where there is no additional Scripture being written; and therefore, there is no direct teaching by God to man. All that we need to know is found within the pages of the Bible. See the Importance of Bible Doctrine (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Canaan, the Land of Promise	Canaan is the land promised by God to Israel on a number of occasions. It is named <i>Canaan</i> after the <i>Canaanites</i> who live there. In modern terms, this would be the land between Egypt and Lebanon (roughly).
Carnal	A believer is either carnal (out of fellowship) or spiritual (in fellowship). The believer becomes carnal by sinning; he gets back into fellowship by naming his sins to God. See the Doctrine of Rebound (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Circumcision, Circumcise	Circumcision is the physical act of the removal of some skin around the head of the phallus. This usually takes place when a child is 7 or 10 days old. For the Jews, this represented the new birth or regeneration. It represented that person being set apart to God. There is no such thing as female circumcision in the Bible. See the doctrine of circumcision (HTML) (PDF) (WPD). Also, Grace Notes on Circumcision (HTML) (PDF); Jack Ballinger on Circumcision ; Grace Bible Church of Baytown on Circumcision ; L. G. Merritt on Circumcision .
Client Nation	A client nation, is a national entity in which a certain number of spiritually mature Christians (the salt of the earth) have formed a pivot sufficient to sustain the nation and through which God specifically protects this nation so that believers can fulfill the divine mandates of evangelism, communication and custodianship of Bible doctrine, providing a haven for Jews, and sending missionaries abroad. The United States is a client-nation to God. A client nation must have freedom: Freedom to seek God, freedom to use one's own volition and self-determination to succeed or fail, freedom from anarchy and tyranny, freedom for evangelism, freedom for believers to hear Bible teaching without government interference and, therefore, to grow spiritually, and freedom to send missionaries to other nations. Doctrine of the Client Nation (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Consecration	Consecration is the act of inducting a person into a permanent office with a ceremony (as the High Priest is consecrated for service in the book of Exodus of Leviticus). The Tabernacle and altar were also consecrated for specific service to Y ^e howah. These things are declared to be sacred or set apart. In the Christian life, we are consecrated positionally at salvation; and, as we grow spiritually, we consecrate (set ourselves apart) spiritually.
Dispensation, Dispensations	A Dispensation is a period of human history expressed from Divine viewpoint (God's point of view). Dispensations give us the Divine outline of human history (or, God's different game plans for various periods of time in history). See the doctrine of Dispensations (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Divine Discipline	Divine discipline is the divinely-ordered corrective action through which God motivates His children to turn away from sin and to return to the post salvation spiritual life. We are disciplined when we are out of fellowship (by means of sin); and we get back into fellowship by naming our sins to God. See the Doctrine of Divine Discipline (Maranatha Church—Jack M. Ballinger) (Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries) (Pastor Doug Laird) (Reasons for Christian Suffering by Dr. Robert D. Luginbill)

Definition of Terms	
Divine Good	This is good which is completely in accordance with the plan of God. In order for a person to perform acts of divine good, they must be in fellowship and be thinking Bible doctrine. As a result, that which they do is divine good and moves the plan of God forward. See also the Doctrine of Divine Good (L.G. Merritt—West Bank Bible Church) (Grace Bible Church of Baytown) (Maranatha Church).
Divine Viewpoint	Divine viewpoint is how God thinks. This is very different than how man thinks. The Lord says, "My thoughts are not like yours. Your ways are not like mine. Just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:8–9; ERV) See Human Viewpoint Versus Divine Viewpoint Thinking (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Eternity Past	<i>Time</i> is an invention of God, and we find ourselves within the concept of time. However, prior to God inventing time, there is, what we call, eternity past, a <i>time and place</i> , if you will, before <i>time and place</i> existed. It is here when God made the Divine Decree (above).
Fellowship (with God)	Fellowship means that we enjoy a current, active relationship with God. This is a real state of being; but it does not mean that we feel it. We lose fellowship with God by sinning; and we regain that fellowship by naming our sins to God (also known as, <i>rebound</i> ; as explained in 1John 1:9). R. B. Thieme, Jr. called the naming of your sins and the resultant restoration to fellowship as <i>rebound</i> . See <i>Rebound and Keep Moving!</i> (R. B. Thieme, Jr.) Rebound (Kukis).
Gen X	This is a short and clever reference to the generation of the Exodus. I was going to try to represent this as Gen Ex, but that looked too much like I was just naming the first two books of the Bible. At least with Gen X, most understand that we are speaking of a specific generation. Gen X stands for generation exodus; the generation of adults (20 and older) who left Egypt with Moses. Their children with them and the children born in the wilderness will be called the generation of promise.
God's Plan, the Plan of God	God's plan is essentially the divine decree (s). God has a plan for the human race, for Jesus Christ His Son, and for all of those on this planet who believe in Him. Often this plan includes the actions of unbelievers, foreknown by God, but not foreordained. See Grace Notes' Plan of God (HTML—Bolender) (PDF—Bolender); L. G. Merritt (The Plan of God); Joe Griffin (God Exists: Navigating the Web of Truth); Don Samdahl (Summary of the Plan of God); R. B. Thieme, Jr. (The Plan of God).
Heart	In the original text of the Bible, the <i>heart</i> refers to the <i>thinking</i> of the soul. In the Bible, the word <i>heart</i> does not refer to emotions or to the physiological pump. However, some modern translations will translate some words <i>heart</i> that should not be so translated. The heart is also called the right lobe. Prov. 23:7 As a man thinks in his right lobe [heart], so he is. (Translation probably by R. B. Thieme, Jr.) Doctrine of the Heart (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
High Priest (the Chief Priest)	From the Aaronic tribe of the Levites comes the priests. From among those, there is one man who is in charge, or who has the authority. He is called the High Priest, the chief priest, or simply the priest. Priests represent man to God. The High Priest is a shadow of Jesus to come. See the Priesthoods of God and of Man: (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Human Spirit	We store information about God and the plan of God in the human spirit. Only the believer has a functioning human spirit. See the Doctrine of the Human Spirit (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Definition of Terms	
Human Viewpoint	Human viewpoint is man's thinking apart from Bible doctrine and apart from divine establishment thinking. See Human Viewpoint versus Divine Viewpoint (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
The Jewish Age	The period of time which includes the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob); the nation Israel; and the Tribulation (which takes place at the end of the Church Age). The Jewish Age is equivalent to the Age of Israel. See the Three Dispensations: The Age of Israel, the Age of the Hypostatic Union and the Church Age (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
The Law of Moses, The Law	<p>The Mosaic Law (often referred to as <i>the Law</i>) is the Law which God gave orally to Moses, which Moses wrote down. It is found at the beginning of Exodus 20 and continues through the book of Numbers (with some narrative integrated into the text of the Law). The book of Deuteronomy summarizes and reviews much of the Mosaic Law and adds in some additional applications (Deuteronomy is actually a series of sermons given by Moses to the people of Israel—Moses himself wrote these sermons).</p> <p>Often the words <i>the Law</i> refer back to the books specifically written by Moses (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). See also (the Spokane Bible Church on the Mosaic Law.) (Maranatha Church on the Mosaic Law).</p>
Levitical Priesthood	Levi, one of the tribes of Israel, was entrusted with the spiritual responsibilities of Israel. One branch of Levites, the descendants of Aaron, would make up what is called the Levitical Priesthood. See the Priesthoods of God and the Priesthoods of Man (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Pastor, Pastor-teacher	The pastor (or pastor-teacher) is the highest spiritual gift with regards to authority. He has the authority over a single church. He is given one level of authority when he is called by the church into service; and then he develops a higher level of authority by teaching the Word of God. This is not, however, the authority to run the lives of individuals at the church. The pastor can teach the Word of God with near complete accuracy, yet members of his congregation might do the exact opposite. Grace Notes' Pastor-Teachers in the Church Age (HTML) (PDF); Jack Ballinger (Pastor-teacher); Roy Cloudt (pastor-teacher).
Personal Sense of Destiny	A person so in tune with the will of God (by means of knowledge of doctrine), that they understand their reason for being alive and they execute the plan of God almost as if God were whispering into their ear what to do (God does not whisper into anyone's ears today). This doctrine can be found at Grace Bible Church, Wenstrom , Grace and Truth Bible Ministries and Robt McLaughlin .
Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)	In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers). See the Doctrine of Rebound (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).

Definition of Terms	
The Revealed God (or, the Revealed Lord)	<p>Throughout human history, God has revealed Himself in a number of ways. Before the incarnation, when anyone believed in this revelation of God, he was saved (Genesis 15:6). When Jesus was born, God revealed Himself in Jesus (Hebrews 1:1–2); and we are now saved by believing in Jesus.</p> <p>We all come to a time of God-consciousness where we understand the concept and possibility of the existence of God. At that point, we face 2 great questions: (1) do we want to know this God and (2) are will willing to believe in God as He has revealed Himself or do we make a god in our own image and worship that? In both the Old and New Testaments, God will make Himself known (He reveals Himself) to those who will believe in Him and to others as well. We know Him firmly and concretely as Jesus Christ; and in the Old Testament, He is known as the God of the Jews, the Creator of the Universe, the God of Moses (or of Abraham), etc.</p>
Signs and Wonders	<p>These are unusual and observable acts which take place, often involving a change of one thing into another. God primarily employs signs and wonders during history-changing events (such as, the removal of Israel from Egypt, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, or the establishment of the Church Age). Most believers in the Church Age will never see any signs and wonders. See the Doctrine of Signs, Miracles and Healings (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).</p>
Sin unto Death	<p>The phrase "sin unto death" describes the final stage of divine discipline in which God removes from the earth the person who is totally alienated from God. The "sin unto death" is not a particular sin; but it is, rather, a mental attitude of total indifference to and rebellion against the will and purpose of God. For more information, see the Doctrine of the Sin unto Death (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).</p>
Soul , Human Soul , Souls	<p>The soul is the immaterial part of man. It has volition, mentality, vocabulary, norms and standards, conscience, consciousness, self-consciousness, and the sin nature. The human soul has a technical meaning, where it is contrasted with the human spirit: the human soul stores up human experience and information about life on earth, while the human spirit specifically contains information related to God and the spiritual life. Grace Bible Church of Baytown (Characteristics, Diagram, Soul and Depravity of the Soul, Battle for Soul Control, Soul Tragedy, Prospering Soul, Soul's Need for Daily Doctrine, Soul's Need #2); Grace Notes (Doctrine of the Soul; PDF).</p>
Spiritual Growth	<p>Spiritual growth for the believer is an option. We do not automatically grow spiritually simply because we have believed in Jesus Christ. We grow because we spend time in the Spirit (using rebound) and because we learn Bible doctrine under the ministry of a well-qualified pastor-teacher. See Living the Christian Life (HTML) (PDF) (WPD); Christian Mechanics (HTML) (PDF) (WPD), the Stages of Spiritual Growth (HTML) (PDF) (WPD); and the Spiritual Life (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).</p>
Spiritual Life , Spiritual Lives	<p>The spiritual life is the life that God expects us to lead. Fundamental to the spiritual life is rebound (naming your sins to God and being filled with the Spirit) and spiritual growth (learning and believing Bible doctrine). Even though we are commanded to live the spiritual life, this is not an imposition to our lives, but enlightenment and peace of mind. The unbeliever cannot lead a spiritual life. (HTM) (PDF) (The Spiritual Life via the 10 problem solving devices—R. B. Thieme, Jr.) (Walking in the Spirit—Chafer) (Spiritual Metabolism—Robert R. McLaughlin)</p>

Definition of Terms	
Spiritual Maturity	Spiritual maturity is achieved through spiritual growth. One grows spiritually by using the rebound technique (1John 1:9) and by hearing, understanding and believing the teaching of the Word of God (aka, Operation Z). R. B. Thieme, Jr. has coined several terms which mean roughly the same thing: the edification complex structure of the soul and supergrace. See Christian Mechanics (HTML) (PDF) (WPD), the Stages of Spiritual Growth (HTML) (PDF) (WPD); and the Doctrine of the Edification Complex of the Soul (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Spiritual realm	The spiritual realm is the real but unseen portion of our lives. This realm includes God, salvation through Jesus Christ, Bible doctrine residing within our human spirit, and the Angelic Conflict. Reference the Spiritual Life (HTML) (PDF) (WPD), the Angelic Conflict (HTML) (PDF) (WPD), and the Importance of Bible Doctrine (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Spiritual skills	<p>The most basic spiritual skills are rebound (naming one's recent sins to God) and the intake of Bible doctrine (generally at a local church taught by a pastor-teacher). Based upon the doctrine in the soul of a believer, one moves on to use more advanced skills like the faith-rest technique. These are also known as the ten problem solving devices and can only be employed by the believer in Jesus Christ. See the Ten Problem Solving Devices (R. B. Thieme, Jr.) (chart) (McLaughlin).</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <p>Gratitude Gauge (a graphic); from the Lighthouse Bible Church; accessed June 23, 2023.</p>
Type, Typical, Antitype, Typology, Typological	A type is a person, a thing or an act which looks forward to Jesus or to Jesus on the cross. For instance, Isaac's birth was the <i>type</i> ; our Lord's birth was the <i>antitype</i> , which was the fulfillment of the type. <i>Typical</i> is the adjective; and <i>typology</i> is the study of type. <i>Typological</i> , an adjective, is, <i>of or relating to typology or types</i> . See Typology (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
<p>Some of these definitions are taken from http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/ http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/terms-and-definitions/ http://www.theopedia.com/</p>	

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

An Introduction to Exodus 4

Introduction: As we have noted, the chapter breaks are not inspired and this is particular chapter break is a good example of a bad chapter break. We are still observing the conversation between Moses and the **Revealed God** (Jesus Christ). Then, suddenly, in mid-conversation, the chapter suddenly ends. Chapter 3

should have been continued as far as Exodus 4:17, which is the end of the conversation between Jesus Christ and Moses and chapter 4 should have begun with Exodus 4:18, when Moses takes his family and returns to Egypt.

The reason I do not re-do the chapters and set them up properly is, I make these documents to match up with the common English Bible translation. If someone is studying Exodus 4:1–5, then I prefer for them to find that information under Exodus 4, even though those verses are properly placed at the end of Exodus 3.

During this return, Moses is required to **circumcise** his children (who are grown men now) and this duty is relegated to his wife, who finds the experience repugnant. This portion of God's Word is amusing because we have the very bitchy opinion of the wife of Moses given to the man who would lead two million Jews out of Egypt. We will also have the opportunity to meet Moses' brother Aaron.

Sometimes, these chapters are divided up poorly (chapter and verse divisions are not divinely inspired). Exodus 4:1–19 continue the conversation between God and Abraham in the desert-wilderness. It makes more sense to me to place these verses back with Exodus 3. The remainder of this chapter is Moses (and Aaron) going to Egypt. This would have made for an additional short chapter (Exodus 4:20–31); but that division would have made a lot more sense than cutting off this meeting between God and Moses in mid-conversation. Nevertheless, in the chapter studies, Exodus 3 will contain all of chapter three and Exodus 4 will contain all of chapter four.

The NET Bible: In chap. 3, the first part of this extensive call, Yahweh promises to deliver his people. At the hesitancy of Moses, God guarantees his presence will be with him, and that assures the success of the mission. But with chap. 4, the second half of the call, the tone changes sharply. Now Moses protests his inadequacies in view of the nature of the task. In many ways, these verses address the question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" There are three basic movements in the passage. The first nine verses tell how God gave Moses signs in case Israel did not believe him (4:1-9). The second section records how God dealt with the speech problem of Moses (4:10-12). And finally, the last section records God's provision of a helper, someone who could talk well (4:13-17). See also J. E. Hamlin, "The Liberator's Ordeal: A Study of Exodus 4:1-9," Rhetorical Criticism [PTMS], 33-42.²

In Exodus 4, there are two words which we find repeated several times: *go* and *return* (often, they are placed together in this chapter). Exodus 4 is the *go and return* chapter. It is all about getting Moses to leave Midian and to go to Egypt, and having a plan for what he will do in Egypt.

Although not all of Exodus is chiasmi, there are a few interesting ones.

Chiasmus of Exodus 4:1–5 (Chiasmus Exchange)

A (1)	And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor listen to my voice: for they will say, The LORD has not appeared unto you.
B (2)	And the LORD said unto him, What is that in your hand? And he said, A rod.
C(3)	And 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.
C'(4)	And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth your hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it,...
B'	...and it became a rod in his hand:
A'(5)	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 unto you.

From <http://www.chiasmusxchange.com/2016/02/08/exodus-41-8/> modified; accessed October 18, 2017.

² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 12, 2017.

Fundamental Questions About Exodus 4

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It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel of Exodus 4

Exodus 4 will begin with

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We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Exodus 4

Characters

Commentary

Characters	Commentary

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We need to know where this chapter takes place.

The Places of Exodus 4

Place

Description

Place	Description

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Timeline for Exodus 4

Legend

Birth or death

God speaks with Abraham

Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)

Parentetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.

The entire **Abrahamic Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The entire **Patriarchal Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Much of the commentary on the far right came from others' works (like Brent MacDonald).

Brent MacDonald	Steve Rudd	Age of Moses	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
1805 B.C.	1806 B.C.		1606 B.C.	Gen. 50:26 Exodus 6:1	Joseph dies at age 110
			1625 B.C. (1620 B.C.)	Num. 26:58	Birth of Amram (Levi's grandson, Moses' father).
			1590 B.C. (1584 B.C.)		The death of Levi (age 137)
Reese occasionally supplies 2 dates in his Chronological Bible; the first is his and the second is Klassen's.					
			1606–1462 B.C.	Gen. 47:27 Exodus 1:7	From the Patriarchs to the Exodus.
1783 B.C.	1656 B.C.				Hyksos begin ruling in Egypt (Semite kings).
	1556 B.C.				Defeat of Hyksos dynasty
1570 B.C.	1557–1532 B.C.				Ahmoose reign (wife Nefertiri); beginning of the 18 th Dynasty in Egypt.
1546 B.C.	1532–1511 B.C.				Amuntotep reign
			1580 B.C. (1542 B.C.)	Exodus 1:8–14	Egyptian bondage and oppression increases.
	1526 B.C.				Amuntotep kills children
1522 B.C.	1526 B.C.	0		Exodus 2:2	Birth of Moses
1522 B.C.	1526 B.C.			Exodus 2:5	Hatshepsut, age 15, adopts baby Moses.
1526 B.C.	1511–1498 B.C.				Thutmose I reign (wife Ahmoose)

Brent MacDonald	Steve Rudd	Age of Moses	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
1514 B.C.	1498–1485 B.C.				Thutmose II – Hatshepsut (his half-sister and co-ruler) Pharaohs of Oppression
1504 B.C.					Hatshepsut continues reign with Thutmose III
	1466 B.C.			Num. 11:29 Exodus 33:11	Birth of Joshua
1482 B.C.				Exodus 2:11-15 Acts 7:23	Moses flees to Midian to escape the wrath of Thutmose III. Pharaoh Thutmose III now rules Egypt alone, subsequently destroying most traces of Hatshepsut.
1450 B.C.					Egypt - Pharaoh Amenhotep II (alt. Amenophis II). He was not the oldest son of Thutmose III. Bloodthirsty; liked hand to hand combat, led troops into battle with howls of rage.
1446 B.C.				Exodus 4:18-5:1 1Kings 6:1	Egypt - Moses returns and confronts Amenhotep II.
1446 B.C.	1446 B.C.			Exodus 12:40-41	Moses leads people out of Egypt; the beginning of the exodus. note 3 . Scripture does not state that Pharaoh was killed at this time (read about it here).
					Sinai (Marah, Elim, Rephidim, Mount Sinai, etc.) - Israel in wilderness 40 years (Exodus 16:35). A timeline of stops on the Exodus is here .

Brent MacDonald	Steve Rudd	Age of Moses	Reese's Chronology Bible	Scripture	Event/Description
1424 B.C.					Egypt - Pharaoh Thutmose IV (alt. Tuthmosis IV) reigns, son of Amenhotep II and lesser wife Tiaa. He was not the oldest son. Had dream at the sphinx that he would rule - recorded on stele there.
1414 B.C.					Egypt - Pharaoh Amenhotep III (alt. Amenophis III). The colossi of Memnon are all that remains of his temple near Thebes.
1402 B.C.				Deut. 1:1, 5	Israel - Moses writes and teaches the book of Deuteronomy in land of Moab.
1402 B.C.		120		Deut. 34:7	Moses dies at Mount Nebo at 120 years old
	1406 B.C.				Joshua crosses Jordan River.
1401 B.C.					Israel - Conquests of Joshua in Promised Land begin. Battle of Jericho.

Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed January 29, 2016.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

Steve Rudd from <http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-exodus-route-date-1440bc.jpg> accessed January 29, 2016.

The Reese Chronological Bible; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

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Here is what to expect from Exodus 4:

A Synopsis of Exodus 4

A Synopsis of Exodus 4

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

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Outlines of Exodus 4 (Various Commentators)

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ESV; capitalized used below.

Synopsis of Exodus 4 from the Summarized Bible

Contents:	Moses' objections. Unbelief of the people and Moses' lack of eloquence. Return to Egypt. Message delivered to elders.
Characters:	God, Moses, Aaron, Jethro, Zipporah, elders.
Conclusion:	Unbelief refuses to believe God because it does not find in self a reason for believing. With God, the merest stammerer may prove an efficient minister, neither need he be uneasy as to the reception of the message.
Key Word:	Spokesman, Exodus 4:16. He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him.
Strong Verses:	Exodus 4:11–12 Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." Exodus 4:31 And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.
Striking Facts:	The rod, symbol of power in Christ's hand, was not wrenched away from Moses, but cast down by Moses. It remained a serpent only while out of his hand. The rod, temporarily out of Christ's hand, will soon be taken up again and Satan's power will be over.

Keith L. Brooks, *Summarized Bible; Complete Summary of the Bible*; ©1919; from e-Sword, Exodus 4.

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It is helpful to see what came before and what follows in a brief summary.

The Big Picture (Exodus 1–4)

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Exodus 1	<p>Exodus 1 bridges the gap between Genesis and Exodus, listing the sons of Jacob who entered into Egypt, followed by a later pharaoh who put all of the descendants of Jacob into slavery.</p> <p>In the third section of Exodus 1, pharaoh orders that all of the male infants be killed, as the population of the Hebrew people is growing too quickly.</p>
Exodus 2	<p>Moses is born and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Moses grows up in the palace, but as an adult, he ventures out among the Hebrew slaves and kills an Egyptian slavedriver. Because he is later recognized, Moses flees to Midian to escape punishment. In Midian, Moses becomes closely associated with a Midianite ranching family and he marries one of the man's daughters. Meanwhile, in Egypt, the Israelites cry out because of their slavery and God hears them.</p>
Exodus 3	<p>When Moses is out in the desert-wilderness of Midian, God (manifested as a burning bush) calls upon him to deliver the Jewish people. God carefully tells Moses what he is going to do, speaking first to the elders of Israel and eventually leading the sons of Israel out of Egypt to the Land of Promise. God also tells Moses how he will appeal to Pharaoh, and God indicates that Pharaoh is going to be negative towards this whole idea from the beginning.</p>
Exodus 4A	<p>Moses complains to God that no one would listen to him, so God gives him two miracles to perform. Then God begins to tell Moses what he will do when those miracles are not considered. However, Moses complains that he is not a public speaker and would be unable to do what God is asking him to do. God tells Moses that he is going to meet his brother Aaron, and that Aaron would do the talking for him.</p> <p>Moses tells his father-in-law that he is going to return to Egypt, but does not tell him about his encounter with God, instead saying that he is going to go see his family, to find out if they are still alive.</p> <p>Along the way, God meets Moses and tells him that he must circumcise his sons before they proceed, which he does; and which greatly upsets his wife.</p>
Exodus 4B	<p>In this half of the chapter, God tells Moses what the first and last signs (judgments, plagues) will be.</p> <p>Moses meets Aaron and they go and speak to the elders of Israel, who believe what they say and therefore, they prostrate themselves before God.</p>

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The first chapter heading sometimes does double duty, giving an overall view of the chapter and/or telling what the first section is about. I make an attempt to find 5 translations with very different divisions.

Paragraph Divisions of Modern Translations for Exodus 4				
Amplified Bible	Tree of Life Version	New English Trans.	New Century V.	CEV
Moses Given Powers	Objections and Excuses	The Source of Sufficiency	Proof for Moses	The Lord Gives Great Power to Moses
	v. 1		v. 1	v. 1
	v. 2a		v. 2a	v. 2a
vv. 1–5	v. 2b	vv. 1–5	v. 2b	v. 2b
	vv. 3–4		v. 3a	v. 3
			vv. 3b–5	v. 4
	v. 5			v. 5
			v. 6	v. 6
vv. 6–9	vv. 6–7	vv. 6–9	v. 7	v. 7
	vv. 8–9		vv. 8–9	vv. 8–9
	v. 10	v. 10	v. 10	v. 10
vv. 10–13	vv. 11–12	vv. 11–12	vv. 11–12	vv. 11–12
	v. 13	v. 13	v. 13	v. 13
Aaron to Speak for Moses				
vv. 14–17	vv. 14–17	v. 14	vv. 14–17	vv. 14–17
		vv. 15–17		
	Moses Returns to Egypt	The Return of Moses	Moses Returns to Egypt	Moses Returns to Egypt
	v. 18a		v. 18a	v. 18a
	v. 18b		v. 18b	v. 18b
vv. 18–20	vv. 19–20	vv. 18–23	v. 19	vv. 19–20
			v. 20	
vv. 21–23	vv. 21–23		vv. 21–23	vv. 21–23
				Zipporah's Son Is Circumcised
vv. 24–26	vv. 24–26	vv. 24–26	vv. 24–26	vv. 24–26
				Aaron Is Sent To Meet Moses
vv. 27–31	vv. 27–31	vv. 27–31	vv. 27–28	vv. 27–28
			vv. 29–31	vv. 29–31

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Changes—additions and subtractions (for Exodus 4): Very often, when I begin a new chapter, I have either discovered a new translations, a new commentary; or have decided to leave out a particular translation or commentary. Sometimes, I make a minor formatting change. I have always placed such comments before the beginning of the first verse. So one formatting change is, *the addition of this more formal approach to changes, giving it a section of its own*. Many times, if I like a change a lot, I will occasionally go back and make that change in previous chapters.

Previously in the weekly study of Genesis, I used the Modern KJV translation (this is the second set of original notes placed in the chapter-by-chapter study of Genesis). For the book of Exodus, I will use the New King James Version (unless otherwise noted), which is a superior (but not perfect) translation. Therefore, an unnamed translation of Exodus will either be the NKJV or it will be one of the three original translations developed for each chapter.

There will be 3 formatting changes beginning with this book is (1) I will skip two lines after the translation of any portion of a verse; (2) when a verse is complete, I will also include the mostly literal translation of that verse; and (3) at the end of the passage, I will include both the mostly literal translation for that passage as well as the Kukis paraphrase.

The Doctrinal Dictionary allows you to go back and forth between the first occurrence of a specific term and the dictionary where its definition is found (they will be cross-linked).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God Gives Moses the Assets with Which to Speak to His People and to Pharaoh

Exodus 4 picks up right where Exodus 3 leaves off. Moses had come across a burning bush out in the desert-wilderness, so he turns aside to get a closer look at it, and God speaks to him from the burning bush.

Moses and God were speaking to one another at the end of Exodus 3 and this conversation will continue in Exodus 4. Placing a division between these chapters makes little sense. The only difference between the chapters is, God speaks to Moses in Exodus 3:15–22; and Moses responds in Exodus 4:1 (they had been talking back and forth beginning in v. 4 in chapter 3; so Exodus 4 simply continues this conversation (vv. 1–17).

God began talking to Moses in Exodus 3, Moses began to object to being sent to Pharaoh, offering up several excuses why he is not the man for the job. God then said the following:

“You must say to the Israelites, ‘Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God whom Abraham worshiped, whom Isaac worshiped, and whom Jacob worshiped, has sent me to you. Yahweh is my name forever, and this is what all generations should call me.’ Go to Egypt and gather together the elders. Say to them, ‘Yahweh, the God whom Abraham worshiped, whom Isaac worshiped, and whom Jacob worshiped, has appeared to me and said: I have seen what the Egyptian people have done to you. I promise that I will rescue you from being treated badly in Egypt, and I will take you to the land where the descendants of Canaan, Heth, Amor, Periz, Hiv, and Jebus live. It is a good land where you can grow many crops and raise much livestock.’

God tells Moses exactly what to do and where to go.

The elders will do what you say. Then you and the elders will go to the king of Egypt, and you will say to him, ‘Yahweh, whom we Hebrews worship as God, has met with us. So now we ask you to allow us to travel for three days to a place in the wilderness in order that there we may offer sacrifices to Yahweh, our God.’ But I know that the king of Egypt will allow you to go only if he sees that he has no other choice. So I will use my power by performing many miracles there. Then he will allow you to leave. When this happens, I will cause the people of Egypt to honor the Hebrew people so that when you leave Egypt, they will give you what you need for the journey. At that time, each Hebrew woman will ask for what belongs to the Egyptian women living nearby. The Egyptians will give you all they have, silver and gold jewelry and clothing. You will put these things on your children. In this way, you will take everything from the Egyptians.” (Exodus 3:15b–22, Unlocked Dynamic Bible)

Then God tells Moses how this is all going to turn out.

Moses is still not going for it. He voices another objection: In Exodus 3:18, God has told Moses that the people will listen to him. Still, despite what God says, Moses finds reason to object.

As always, 3 separate translations will be produced for each verse. The slavishly literal translation attempts to preserve word order and number, making it more literal than Young’s translation (however, I do not preserve the

consistency of the translation that Young does). The moderately literal translation may add or delete a definite article, change the number of a noun to correspond with the English sense of thinking, and the order is often changed in order to better represent our English sentence structure. The paraphrase is an attempt to give a thought-for-thought interpretation of what each verse tells us.

Kukis slavishly literal:

And so answers Moses and so he says, “And behold, they will not believe to me and they will not listen in my voice, for they will say, ‘Did not appear unto you Y^ehowah.’ ”

Exodus
4:1

Kukis mostly literal translation:

So Moses answered [God] and said, “Listen, they will not believe me and they will not listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘Y^ehowah has not appeared to you.’ ”

Kukis not-so-literal paraphrase:

So Moses answered God, saying, “Listen, the people of Israel will not believe me and they will not even listen to a word I say, because they will say, ‘Jehovah did not appear to you.’ ”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac (= Aramaic) and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation³; George Lamsa’s translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton’s translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles’ Bible instead of Brenton’s translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton’s (or the text of the Complete Apostles’ Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong’s numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles’ Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

³ I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use www.latinvulgate.com.

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

I will only list the translation from the Dead Sea Scrolls if it exists and if it is different from the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. From http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos_Exodus.html and first published in 1862.

The very fact that we have ancient Greek, Latin, Syriac and Arabic translations of the Bible testifies to its accuracy. There may be a difference word or phrase here or there; the Greek may have a singular where the Hebrew has a plural, but there is no set of doctrines in the Latin Bible which are any different from those found in the Greek Bible or the Syriac Bible. These different cultures when they chose to translate the Bible chose to translate it as accurately as possible. Where human viewpoint would expect to find doctrinal differences between the Bible of the Hebrews, of the Greeks or of the Romans, no such differences exist.

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so answers Moses and so he says, "And behold, they will not believe to me and they will not listen in my voice, for they will say, 'Did not appear unto you Y ^e howah.'"
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum (trans. Etheridge)	.
Jerusalem targum	.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Mosheh answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me nor hearken to me: for they will say, The Lord hath no been revealed to thee.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Mosheh answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to me; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared to thee.
Latin Vulgate	Moses answered and said: They will not believe me, nor hear my voice, but they will say: The Lord hath not appeared to thee.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mosha answered, "But, behold, they will not believe me, nor listen to my voice; for they will say, 'Mar-Yah has not appeared to you.'"
Peshitta (Syriac)	AND Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor listen to my voice; for they will say, The LORD has not appeared to you.
Septuagint (Greek)	God commissions Moses and Aaron. Ex.4.1-17 And Moses answered and said, If they believe me not, and do not listen to my voice (for they will say, God has not appeared to you), what shall I say to them?

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:⁴

Bible in Basic English	And Moses, answering, said, It is certain that they will not have faith in me or give ear to my voice; for they will say, You have not seen the Lord.
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⁴ Many of these Bibles fall into 2 or more categories. The CEV, for instance, is **approved** by the Catholic Church, it is a limited vocabulary Bible, and it is a paraphrase, for the most part.

Easy English	God shows Moses some strange things Then Moses answered: 'But perhaps the leaders of Israel will not believe me. Perhaps they will not listen to my voice. Perhaps they will say: "The Lord did not show himself to you." '
Easy-to-Read Version	Proof for Moses Then Moses said to God, "But the Israelites will not believe me when I tell them that you sent me. They will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'"
Good News Bible (TEV)	God Gives Moses Miraculous Power Then Moses answered the Lord, "But suppose the Israelites do not believe me and will not listen to what I say. What shall I do if they say that you did not appear to me?"
<i>The Message</i>	Moses objected, "They won't trust me. They won't listen to a word I say. They're going to say, 'God? Appear to him? Hardly!'"
Names of God Bible	"They will never believe me or listen to me!" Moses protested. "They will say, ' Yahweh didn't appear to you.'"
NIRV	Signs for Moses to Do Moses answered, "What if the elders of Israel won't believe me? What if they won't listen to me? Suppose they say, 'The Lord didn't appear to you.' Then what should I do?"
New Simplified Bible	Moses responded: »What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say: 'Jehovah has not appeared to you.'«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Signs of power Then Moses replied, "But what if they don't believe me or pay attention to me? They might say to me, 'The Lord didn't appear to you!'"
Contemporary English V.	Moses asked the LORD, "Suppose everyone refuses to listen to my message, and no one believes that you really appeared to me?"
The Living Bible	But Moses said, "They won't believe me! They won't do what I tell them to. They'll say, 'Jehovah never appeared to you!'"
New Berkeley Version	.
New Century Version	Proof for Moses Then Moses answered, "What if the people of Israel do not believe me or listen to me? What if they say, 'The Lord did not appear to you'?"
New Life Version	Then Moses answered, "What if they will not believe me or listen to me? They might say, 'The Lord has not shown Himself to you.' "
New Living Translation	Signs of the Lord's Power But Moses protested again, "What if they won't believe me or listen to me? What if they say, 'The Lord never appeared to you'?"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Moses asked: 'But, what if they don't listen to me and do what I tell them to do? Or, what if they say, <i>God hasn't appeared to you...</i> what should I say then?'
Beck's American Translation	.
International Standard V	Moses Argues with God Then Moses answered, "Look, they won't believe me and they won't listen to me. Instead, they'll say, 'The LORD didn't appear to you.'"
New Advent (Knox) Bible	But Moses still had his answer; What if they will not believe me, he said, or give a hearing? What if they tell me to my face that I never had any vision of the Lord?
Translation for Translators	After Moses tried to resist Yahweh's appointment, Yahweh gave him power to perform miracles

Moses/I replied, “But what if the *Israeli people* ‹do not believe me/are not convinced› or not do what I tell them? What if they say, ‘Yahweh did not appear to you!’ ”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Moses was to answer, and was to say: Were they to give me credit, indeed were they to listen to my loud call? - They were to say: Is Jehovah to have appeared to you?
Conservapedia	Moses said in answer, "But, Sir! They won't believe me, nor will they even listen to me, for they will say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'" Excuses, excuses.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Then Moses answered and said ; " But they may not trust me, and not listen to my voice ; for they may say, ' We have never seen your God, the EVER-LIVING ! "
HCSB	Miraculous Signs for Moses Then Moses answered, “What if they won’t believe me and will not obey me but say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you?’”
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	Moses answered and said: See, they will not believe me nor hearken unto my voice: but will say, the Lord has not appeared unto you.
Lexham English Bible	Yahweh Provides Signs and Help for Speaking And Moses answered, and he said, "And if they do not believe me and they do not listen to my voice, but they say, 'Yahweh did not appear to you?'"
NIV, ©2011	Signs for Moses Moses answered, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you?’”
Tree of Life Version	Objections and Excuses Then Moses said, “But look, they will not believe me or listen to my voice. They will say, ‘Adonai has not appeared to you.’”
Urim-Thummim Version	And Moses answered and said, But, look, they will not believe me, nor listen to my voice; for they will say, Yahweh has not appeared to you.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Moses granted miraculous powers Moses replied to Yahweh, “What if they will not believe me or listen to me? Maybe they will say: ‘That’s not true. Yahweh did not appear to you.’”
The Heritage Bible	And Moses answered, and said, And behold, they will not believe me, and will not attentively hear my voice, because they will say, Jehovah has not appeared to you.
New American Bible (2002)	"But," objected Moses, "suppose they will not believe me, nor listen to my plea? For they may say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.'" ⁵
New Jerusalem Bible	Moses replied as follows, 'But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my words, and say to me, "Yahweh has not appeared to you?'"
Revised English Bible	“But they will never believe me or listen to what I say,” Moses protested; “they will say that it is untrue that the LORD appeared to me.”

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Moshe replied, “But I’m certain they won’t believe me, and they won’t listen to what I say, because they’ll say, ‘Adonai did not appear to you.’”
exeGesés companion Bible	<u>THE SIGNS OF YAH VEH TO MOSHEH</u> And Mosheh answers and says, And behold, they neither trust me, nor hearken to my voice:

⁵ Also called the revised edition.

Hebraic Transliteration	.	for they say, Yah Veh was not seen by you.
Hebrew Names Version	.	
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	.	But Moses spoke up and said, “What if they do not believe me and do not listen to me, but say: The Lord did not appear to you?”
Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation	.	<i>The Burning Bush</i> When Moses [was able to] reply, he said, 'But they will not believe me. They will not listen to me. They will say, 'God did not appear to you.' ' The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.
Natural Israelite Bible	.	
Orthodox Jewish Bible	.	And Moshe answered and said, But, what if they will not believe me, nor pay heed unto my voice but will say, Hashem hath not appeared unto thee.
Restored Names Version	.	

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>		Moses Given Powers Then Moses answered [the Lord] and said, “What if they will not believe me or take seriously what I say? For they may say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’”
The Expanded Bible		Proof for Moses Then Moses answered, “What if the people of Israel [they] do not believe [trust] me or listen to me [my voice]? What if they say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you?’”
Kretzmann’s Commentary		Verses 1-9 God Gives Moses Miraculous Powers And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. The fear and anxiety of Moses here discovered another objection, that based upon the fact that the people were no longer accustomed to prophetic voices and would therefore not acknowledge his call.
NET Bible®		<i>The Source of Sufficiency</i> Moses answered again [Heb “and Moses answered and said.”], “And if [Or “What if.”] they do not believe me or pay attention to me, [Heb “listen to my voice,” so as to respond positively.] but say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you?’” When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote. Language footnotes will be placed in the Hebrew exegesis. Some footnotes will be quoted elsewhere in this document.
The Voice		Moses: What if they don’t trust me? What if they don’t listen to a single word I say? They are <i>more likely</i> to reply: “The Eternal has not revealed Himself to you.”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...	and "Mosheh ^{Pluckedout} answered and he said, <but> they will not [support] me, and they will not hear my voice given that they will say, "YHWH ^{He Is} did not [appear] to you,...
Concordant Literal Version		Then Moses answered and said: Yet behold, they shall not believe me, nor shall they hearken to my voice, for they shall say, Yahweh has not appeared to you.
English Standard Version		Moses Given Powerful Signs Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.'"
Green’s Literal Translation	.	
King James 2000 Version	.	

21st Century KJV

Modern English Version

Moses' Miraculous Signs

And Moses answered and said, "But they will not believe me, nor listen to my voice. For they will say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.' "

Niobi Study Bible

Miraculous Signs for Pharaoh

And Moses answered and said, "But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, 'The LORD has not appeared unto you.'"

NASB

Moses Given Powers

Then Moses said, "What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.'"

New European Version

Moses Doubts God

Moses answered, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor listen to my voice; for they will say, 'Yahweh has not appeared to you'.

New King James Version

Miraculous Signs for Pharaoh

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.'"

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.

Young's Updated LT

And Moses answers and says, "And, if they do not give credence to me, nor hearken to my voice, and say, Jehovah has not appeared unto you?"

The gist of this passage:

Moses objects, saying that the people will not believe him; they will not listen to him, and they will say, "God has not appeared to you."

It is just beginning to dawn on Moses what God is instructing him to do, and he responds with 3 negatives.

Exodus 4:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'ânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAWH</i>]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

Translation: So Moses answered [God] and said,...

We are continuing the conversation between Moses and God from the previous chapter. There was no reason to insert a chapter break here.

In Exodus 3, Moses was leading a flock along the desert-wilderness near Mount Horeb, and he saw a burning bush. When he approach the burning bush, God spoke to him from it. God told Moses that he was to go to Pharaoh and ask for permission to lead his people out for a 3-days journey to worship God. The conversation in chapter 3 is one-sided, with God telling Moses exactly what he is going to do. Moses did the sensible thing, and mostly listened. However, by this time, he has thought things over, and he has a few objections to **God's plan**.

Exodus 4:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hên (הן) [pronounced <i>hayn</i>]	<i>lo!, behold, observe, look, look here, get this, listen, listen up</i>	demonstrative adverb/interjection	Strong's #2005 BDB #243
The NET Bible: Or "What if." The use of הן (hen) is unusual here, introducing a conditional idea in the question without a following consequence clause (see Exod 8:22 HT [8:26 ET]; Jer 2:10; 2 Chr 7:13). The Greek has "if not" but adds the clause "what shall I say to them?" ⁶			
lô' (לא or לוּל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
'âman (אמן) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHN</i>]	<i>to stand firm, to believe, to trust, caused to believe</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #539 BDB #52
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto*; it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to*; in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εις), meaning *into*, as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by*, which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εις) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter*, used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because*; Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about*, used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of anyone, for anyone*. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which* or *in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.

Translation: ..."Listen, they will not believe me..."

⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 12, 2017.

Moses' first objection is, they are not going to believe him. He is supposed to go to the elders of the people of Israel and tell them what he has seen, and tell them what God wants them to do, and he reasonably posits that they are not going to believe that he talked to God in the first place.

Exodus 4:1c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לא or לוּל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâma ^c (שמע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
qôwl (לוּק) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876

Translation: ...and they will not listen to my voice,...

The elders are not going to believe Moses in the first place; and, therefore, they are not going to listen to him. Moses doesn't say it exactly, but the people are going to look at him as a madman (in his opinion).

Exodus 4:1d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לא or לוּל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

Exodus 4:1d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to be seen, to be visible; to let oneself be seen, to appear; to present oneself; to be provided [cared] for (i.e., looked after)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: ...for they will say, 'Y^ehowah has not appeared to you.'

This is a fairly reasonable objection. I fully understand why following God's plan is the way to go; but I fully understand Moses at this point as well. "They are not going to listen to me because they are not going to believe that You appeared to me."

It is very easy to be tough on Moses and many commentators are. I believe that Moses is actually thinking about what God proposes, and it seems dangerous, impossible and absurd to do what God proposes. We would be more likely to doubt the text, if, after God said, "Moses, here's what I want you to do;" Moses said, "Sure, I still know the way back to Egypt. Let me get my wife and sons and we will be off."

Moses is giving logical objections to God.

Moses is taken aback by all of this. He has no idea how he can pull this off. He does not see himself as a messenger of God but, at this point in time, can only see this from the **human viewpoint**. He would just be some fool from the Midian desert who comes to the people of Israel alleging that he has spoken to God. He appears to discount the fact that God would be with him.

God told Moses that the people will listen to him; Moses says that they won't. God's word is filled with promises and mandates that we often find ourselves contradicting. Whereas, it is crystal clear in the Bible that sex is allowed only on the playing field of marriage between a man and a woman and not until after the marriage, how many Christians adhere to this? Here is one place where you have the opportunity to compare yourself to one of the greatest men who ever lived. God said one thing; Moses told God that He is wrong. God has given you specific mandates; you have told God that He is wrong.

Some people have no concept of how inconsequential their opinion is. As a young person, one of the very few areas where my viewpoint lined up with God's was with respect to school. During my tenure at high school, the latest thinking was to ask us students how we felt about this issue or that. I personally was quite uncomfortable with this; I was going to school in order to gain the knowledge to someday have an opinion and I did not have enough information at that time to have an opinion on those things I was expected to have an opinion on. How arrogant we are to have any opinion which is in opposition to God. How much smaller it makes us appear. However, luckily for Moses, God will entertain Moses' concern.

Along these lines, I recently saw a video on Watters' World where high school students had a massive walkout over Trump's temporary and limits immigration ban. When Jesse Watters interviews the students, it became apparent that they did not really have a clue why they were protesting, but it was also clear that they were sincere and passionate about it. No knowledge but lots of emotion. Communists call such people *useful idiots*.

Miraculous Signs for Pharaoh

God has just told Moses exactly what he is supposed to do; and God has told Moses what the final outcome is going to be.

Exodus 4:1 **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.'"** (NKJV)

Moses says, "What if they simply don't believe me?" This seems like the question to have asked first, but we must recognize that Moses is no doubt flabbergasted by this entire situation. 15 minutes ago, Moses was just wandering through the desert-wilderness leading his father-in-law's sheep; now, all of a sudden, God wants him to return to Egypt and lead his people out of there. That's a pretty big deal. Even though Moses is a brilliant man, he is no doubt still coming to grips with what God is expecting of him.

Moses asks, "Suppose that they don't believe me?" This is a very logical question. Moses is to go and speak to the elders of the Hebrews; and just about the first thing he will say is, "I just spoke to God of Abraham and He sent me here to lead you all out of Egypt." How does God know someone won't just say, "Dude, are you crazy? You say that you have talked to God? Get a grip." And then everyone would laugh and Moses would have even less credibility than when he stepped before them in the first place.

Despite the fact that God laid out to Moses exactly what was going to happen, Moses is making a reasonable point. However, what is key here is, is this a matter of genuine curiosity on the part of Moses; or is this simply another excuse that he is offering up to get out of doing this?

I have been claiming that Moses is at some level of **spiritual maturity**; but he will put up some opposition to God in this chapter. How to explain?

Moses' Current Spiritual Maturity Level

1. It is logical that Moses has attained some level of spiritual maturity as a believer in the Revealed God. God would not have randomly plucked Moses out of the 2 million Hebrews who are available.
2. An axiom of the **spiritual life** is, God uses prepared men. It is a mistake to believe that God would choose unprepared people to do the heavy lifting in the **Angelic Conflict**.
3. As we have discussed, Moses had to have already believed in the Revealed God and then developed some spiritual maturity.
4. What seems likely is, he learned **Bible doctrine** (spiritual information) from his father-in-law, who was a priest.
5. Although there is no specific verse stating, *and Reuel taught Moses the Word of God*; Moses, by the time he has gotten to this point, knows the background of his people, which means, he knows at least portions of the book of Genesis.
 - 1) I lean towards this as the most logical explanation, given that Reuel appears to be a legitimate priest and that he is kept on by Moses in the future as an important advisor. Moses would do this only if he respected the wisdom of his father-in-law.
 - 2) Respecting the wisdom of your father-in-law suggests, on the part of Moses, that he believed Reuel to have divine wisdom.
 - 3) Also, Moses running into this man in the first place was not some random event. I believe that this is right in line with the **plan of God**. Another spiritual axiom of life: there are no random events in the **spiritual realm**. If you want to know the Word of God, then God will lead you in that direction. If you truly want spiritual information, God will provide that for you (this is different from wanting

Moses' Current Spiritual Maturity Level

- information which backs up what you already believe).
- 4) God always uses prepared men; so it is reasonable to assume that Moses was prepared for his mission during this time in Midian (Moses spent 40 years in Midian).
 6. We have also discussed the possibility that Moses learned under an ancient Hebrew scholar (s) when still in the Pharaoh's palace. This is also conjecture, but it is reasonable conjecture.
 - 1) Moses would have been well-educated as he was in line to become a pharaoh.
 - 2) Moses would have known about the peoples round about; and he may have had a Hebrew teacher for some of this.
 - 3) There is no reason to assume that Moses, born a Hebrew, was ignorant of that information; and people in the Hebrew community would have known this as well. So, if Moses had a Hebrew teacher, it is logical that they would have used their Scriptures at that time (the book of Genesis) to teach him.
 7. Even though Moses being taught by Reuel and/or by a Hebrew teacher is conjecture; it is very reasonable conjecture.
 8. The reason we know that Moses knows something about his familial history is, when God speaks of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exodus 3:6), Moses does not ask, "Now, who are those guys exactly?"
 - 1) Now, you may object, saying, *everyone knows their ancestors*.
 - 2) Do you know the names of your ancestors from the 1700 and 1800's? Moses knows his.
 - 3) And, let me point out the obvious: Moses was raised by an Egyptian family; not by a Hebrew family. So the knowledge which he clearly has did not come with the territory (that is, Moses does not know **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** simply because he is a Hebrew man).
 9. God speaks of giving the land of **Canaan** to the Hebrews; Moses does not say, "Now why would You do that, God? I think everyone would be fine just living here in Goshen, as long as Pharaoh sets us free." We know that, if Moses has an objection, then he is going to raise it. We have seen that in the previous chapter. But he never raises an objection to Israel settling in Canaan. Exodus 3:8, 17
 10. Also, Moses appears to have no objections to Israel getting out of Egypt to worship their God. He seems to take it for granted that they worship a very specific God; not one of the Egyptian gods. Exodus 3:18
 11. Moses has no questions about his ancestors or about Canaan; and when he talks to the elders of the Hebrews, they seem to understand these things as givens as well. Exodus 4:30–31
 12. Moses is clearly not shy about voicing objections, but none of them are about his ancestors or about the land of Canaan. Moses does not say, "Now, who is Jacob?" Nor does he say, "What is Your obsession with Canaan?"
 13. There will be one person who seems to have some opposition to all of this: Zippora, Moses' wife of 40 years. When she is required to circumcise her son, she is none too happy about it and she clearly expresses her displeasure. Exodus 4:24–26
 14. Now, you might think there is a bit of a contradiction. I am claiming that Moses has some spiritual chops; but, when God tells him what to do, Moses suddenly says, "I am not capable of doing those things. I am not a good speaker. You need to find somebody else, God."
 15. In real life, we have seen the athlete or celebrity who is converted to Christianity, and, a few days later, he is making pitches for Jesus. This is not God's plan. This is not a good plan. Recall that Jesus prepared His disciples for at least 3 years, and that was a crash course, teaching them day and night. When they began their ministries, they were well-prepared (but not without faults).
 16. Here is what is going on: Moses has the spiritual information; and he has believed most of it. But now God is putting him to the test; now it is time for Moses to walk over the hot coals, as it were, and he expresses some natural reticence. That is pretty normal, because Moses has not had to apply that level of doctrine before. There are times when you cannot move ahead spiritually until God throws something in your way that you must deal with by applying Bible doctrine. You have to apply the **spiritual skills** which God has given you. In other words, the doctrine is in your **human spirit**, God puts a situation in front of you that requires the application of that doctrine; and you move ahead spiritually when you do that. When you use them and see that they work, you develop further confidence in God and His plan.
 17. To sum up: Moses has a level of spiritual maturity; God is now going to require him to apply this doctrine at a level that Moses has not operated at before.

Moses' Current Spiritual Maturity Level

18. Moses will continue to grow spiritually during his next 40 years. His teacher at that time will be God...and he recorded his lessons in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses will interpret and apply Bible doctrine for the next generation of Israel.

Essentially what I have done here is taken information about Moses which we clearly know and place him into a time and place, assuming that he knows this information and believes it. He behaves exactly as we would expect him to.

Exodus 4:1 So Moses answered [God] and said, "Listen, they will not believe me and they will not listen to my voice, for they will say, 'Y^ehowah has not appeared to you.' " (Kukis mostly literal translation)

God is speaking to Moses about what He wants Moses to do, and Moses has clearly balked at the idea, saying, "How can I go to the leaders of Israel and tell them that I have spoken to God?"

Exodus 4:1 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.'" (Kukis paraphrase)

God needs to give Moses some weaponry and some ammunition. When someone goes into battle, it is fine that they understand the plan and protection of God. However, this does not mean that they just wander about holding up a peace sign in the midst of battle. They are going to have military equipment appropriate to the battle.

God is going to issue Moses his minimum military equipment to lead him in battle. He will be given what is necessary in order to fire the first shot.

And so says unto him Yehowah, "What [is] that in your hand?" And he says, "A staff." And so He says, "Cast him ground-ward." And so he casts him ground-ward and so he is for a serpent, and so flees Moses from him.

Exodus
4:2-3

Y^ehowah then said to him, "What [is] that in your hand?" And he answered, "A staff." So God commanded, "Throw it to the ground." He threw it on the ground and it became a serpent. Moses fled from it.

Jehovah then asked him, "What is that in your hand?" Moses answered, "It is a staff." So God commanded, "Throw it down on the ground." Therefore, Moses threw the staff onto the ground and it suddenly became a serpent. Suddenly frightened, Moses ran from it.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so says unto him Yehowah, "What [is] that in your hand?" And he says, "A staff." And so He says, "Cast him ground-ward." And so he casts him ground-ward and so he is for a serpent, and so flees Moses from him.

Dead Sea Scrolls
Targum of Onkelos

.
And the Lord said to him, What is that which is in thy hand? and he said, A rod. And He said, Cast it to the ground; and he cast it upon the ground, and it became a serpent, and Mosheh fled from before it.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And the Lord said to him, What is that in thy hand ? And he said, The rod. And He said, Cast it on the ground; and he cast it to the ground, and it became a serpent;

and Mosheh fled from before it. [JERUSALEM. And He said, Cast it on the ground; and he cast it on the ground.]

Revised Douay-Rheims

Then he said to him: What is that thou holdest in thy hand? He answered: A rod. And the Lord said: Cast it down upon the ground. He cast it down, and it was turned into a serpent: so that Moses fled from it.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta

Mar-Yah said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod."

He said, "Throw it on the ground." He threw it on the ground, and it became a snake; and Mosha ran away from it..

Peshitta (Syriac)

And the LORD said to him, What is that in your hand? He said, A staff. And the LORD said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it.

Septuagint (Greek)

And the Lord said to him, What is this thing that is in your hand? and he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground: and he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses fled from it.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English

And the Lord said to him, What is that in your hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Put it down on the earth. And he put it down on the earth and it became a snake; and Moses went running from it.

Easy English

Easy-to-Read Version–2008

But the Lord said to Moses, "What is that you have in your hand?"

Moses answered, "It is my walking stick."

Then God said, "Throw your walking stick on the ground."

So Moses threw his walking stick on the ground, and it became a snake.

The Message

So God said, "What's that in your hand?"

"A staff."

"Throw it on the ground." He threw it. It became a snake; Moses jumped back—fast!

Names of God Bible

Then **Yahweh** asked him, "What's that in your hand?"

He answered, "A shepherd's staff."

Yahweh said, "Throw it on the ground."

When Moses threw it on the ground, it became a snake, and he ran away from it.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.

The LORD answered, "What's that in your hand?" "A walking stick," Moses replied. "Throw it down!" the LORD commanded. So Moses threw the stick on the ground. It immediately turned into a snake, and Moses jumped back.

The Living Bible

"What do you have there in your hand?" the Lord asked him.

And he replied, "A shepherd's rod."

"Throw it down on the ground," the Lord told him. So he threw it down—and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it!

New Berkeley Version

New Living Translation

Then the LORD asked him, "What is that in your hand?"

"A shepherd's staff," Moses replied.

"Throw it down on the ground," the LORD told him. So Moses threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped back.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible

And the Lord asked him: 'What do you have in your hand?'
And he replied: 'My walking stick.'

	Then [the Lord] said: 'Throw it on the ground.' Well, when he threw it on the ground it became a snake, and Moses ran from it.
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	"What's that in your hand?" the LORD asked him. Moses [Lit. <i>he</i>] answered, "A staff [Or <i>rod</i>]." Then God [Lit. <i>he</i>] said, "Throw it to the ground." He threw it to the ground and it became a snake. Moses ran away from it
New Advent (Knox) Bible	What is that in thy hand? the Lord asked him. A staff, he said. So the Lord bade him cast it on the ground, and when he did so, it turned into a serpent, and Moses shrank away.
Translation for Translators	Yahweh said to him/me, " <i>Look at</i> that thing you are holding in your hand. What is it?" He/I replied, "A ◀walking stick/shepherd's stick▶." He said, "Throw it down on the ground!" So, he/I threw it on the ground, and it became a snake! And he/I ran/jumped away from it.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Jehovah was to intend of that in his hand. He was to say: A staff. He was to say: Be throwing it on the solid grounds. He was to throw it on the solid grounds, even it becomes a snake. Moses was to flee from being turned before it.
Conservapedia	The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A rod [It was probably Moses' shepherd's crook.]" So He said, "Throw that on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it turned into a snake, and Moses ran from it.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	God, however, asked him, " What is in your hand?" and he replied, " A stick." And He then said, " Throw it on the ground ! " So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses fled from before it.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then the Lord said unto him: what is that in your hand? and he said, a rod. And he said, cast it on the ground, and it turned unto a serpent. And Moses ran away from it.
Urim-Thummim Version	YHWH replied to him, What is that in your hand? And he answered, a staff. Then He said, "Cast it on the ground". so he cast it on the ground, and it became a snake and Moses backed away from it fast.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Yahweh said to him, "What is that in your hands?" and he said "A staff". And he said "Cast it to the ground" and he cast it to the ground and it became a snake. And Moses fled from its presence.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Yahweh then asked him, "What is that in your right hand?" "A staff," he replied. God said, "Throw it to the ground." He threw it and it became a serpent; and Moses drew back from it.
The Heritage Bible	And Jehovah said to him, What is that in your hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Throw it on the earth. And he threw it on the earth, and it became a snake, and Moses fled from its face
New American Bible (2002)	The LORD therefore asked him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he answered. The LORD then said, "Throw it on the ground." When he threw it on the ground it was changed into a serpent, and Moses shied away from it.
New American Bible (2011)	The LORD said to him: What is in your hand? "A staff," he answered. God said: Throw it on the ground. So he threw it on the ground and it became a snake [Ex 7:10.], and Moses backed away from it.
Revised English Bible	The LORD said, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," replied Moses. The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground." He did so, and it turned into a snake. Moses drew back hastily,

but the LORD said, “Put your hand out and seize it by the tail.” A portion of v. 4 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	<i>ADONAI</i> answered him, “What is that in your hand?” and he said, “A staff.” He said, “Throw it on the ground!” and he threw it on the ground. It turned into a snake, and Moshe recoiled from it.
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yah Veh says to him, What is that in your hand? And he says, A rod. And he says, Cast it on the earth. - and he casts it on the earth and it becomes a serpent; and Mosheh flees from its face.
Hebraic Roots Bible	And YAHWEH said to him, What is this in your hand? And he said, A staff. And He said, Throw it to the ground. And he threw it to the ground, and it became a hissing creature. And Moses fled from its face.
Judaica Press Complete T. Kaplan Translation	.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Hashem said unto him, What is that in thine yad? And he said, A matteh (a rod, staff). And He said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a nachash; and Moshe fled from before it.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And the LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” And he said, “A staff.” Then He said, “Throw it on the ground.” So Moses threw it on the ground, and it became a [living] serpent [like the royal symbol on the crown of Pharaoh]; and Moses ran from it.
The Expanded Bible Kretzmann’s Commentary	. And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. Moses held his shepherd’s staff in his hand. And 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. The serpent was no delusion, but a fact, and looked dangerous enough to fill the heart of Moses with fear.
NET Bible®	The Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?” He said, “A staff [Or “rod” (KJV, ASV); NCV, CEV “walking stick”; NLT “shepherd’s staff.”]” The Lord [<i>Heb</i> “he”; the referent (the Lord) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] said, “Throw it to the ground.” So he threw it to the ground, and it became a snake, and Moses ran from it.
The Voice	The Eternal One answered Moses. Eternal One: What do you have in your hand? Moses: My shepherd’s staff. Eternal One: Throw your staff down on the ground.

God has been called by many names and titles, and those reflect to some extent aspects of God’s nature and character. In this encounter, God reveals to Moses His name. This is a special name by which God invites His covenant partners to know and call on Him for all time. It sometimes appears in books or translations as YHWH or Yahweh, but this is only a transliteration of the four letters in Hebrew; it’s not a translation of its meaning. The name is built on the Hebrew verb “to be” and refers to the fact that God is the Self-existent One—“I AM WHO I AM.” Many translations render the divine name “LORD” (in capital and small capital letters), but this

translation uses “the Eternal One,” for at the heart of the name is the notion that God has always been and always will be. God transcends time and existence; He is the ground of existence. Out of respect, the ancients would seldom speak or write the covenant name; they would use it only on the most solemn occasions. Still God is establishing a unique relationship with Abraham’s descendants, and it is time to reveal to them His name.

So Moses threw the staff on the ground, and it was transformed into a snake. Moses quickly jumped back *in fear*.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and "YHWH ^{He is} " said to him, what is this in your hand? and he said, a branch, and he said, throw him out unto the land, and he threw him out unto the land, and he existed (as) a serpent, and "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} " fled from his face,...
Concordant Literal Version	Now Yahweh said to him: What is this in your hand? And he answered: A rod. Then He said: Fling it to the earth. So he flung it to the earth, and it became a serpent. And Moses fled from its presence.
Green’s Literal Translation NASB	. The LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?” And he said, “A staff.” Then He said, “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.
New European Version	Yahweh said to him, What is that in your hand? He said, A rod. 3He said, Throw it on the ground. He threw it on the ground, and it became a snake; and Moses ran away from it.
New King James Version	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.
Stuart Wolf Young’s Updated LT	. And Jehovah says unto him, “What is this in your hand?” and he says, “A rod;” and He says, “Cast it to the earth;” and he casts it to the earth, and it becomes a serpent—and Moses flees from its presence.

The gist of this passage: God asks Moses what is in his hand, and he says, “A stick.” God tells him to throw it onto the ground and it becomes a serpent—and Moses backs away from it.

Exodus 4:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
’âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55

Exodus 4:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
mâh (מה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
zeh (זה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260
Together, mâh zeh mean <i>what [is] this; how [can] this [be]; why [is] this [occurring]; what [do we have] here; possibly now explain this</i> . I could not find this listed in Gesenius, so this is my most reasonable guess.			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

Translation: Y^ehowah then said to him, “What [is] that in your hand?”

God asks Moses, “What is in your hand?” Moses has been carrying this staff around, one would presume, possibly for decades.

One of the things which I have noted—and something I have not read elsewhere—is that the miracles of God are always appropriate to the audience. This miracle is done before an audience of one; and so, only one person will see it and be affected by it.

Exodus 4:2a [So the Lord said to him, “What is that in your hand?”](#)

So God asks Moses, “What is in your hand?” God appears to use the Socratic method in order to teach some things, which is legitimate, since God created Socrates and God was aware of everything that Socrates would say and do, a thousand or more years into the future.

God did not ask Moses what was in his hand because God was not sure. He asked Moses so that Moses would have no doubt in his mind as to what he was holding. The miracle which was performed was nothing. It was a very small thing for God to do. The less that we require in the way of miracles, the better off we are. Miracles and wonders do not ground one in the faith. Similarly, Christian [apologetics](#), although they have their place, do not appreciably cause one to grow. Moses will not, later in life, hearken back to this miracle and find strength and power in it. This miracle was good for a few hours; or, at best, a few days.

So, perhaps Moses looks at his hand and then answers:

Exodus 4:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
maṭṭeh (מטה) [pronounced maht-TEH]	<i>staff, branch, scepter, rod; branch; tribe</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4294 BDB #641

The NET Bible: *The staff appears here to be the shepherd's staff that he was holding. It now will become the instrument with which Moses will do the mighty works, for it is the medium of the display of the divine power (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 27; also, L. Shalit, "How Moses Turned a Staff into a Snake and Back Again," BAR 9 [1983]: 72-73).*⁷

Translation: And he answered, "A staff."

Moses identifies what is in his hand. This is likely a staff that he has used for years and years. Moses has no idea what is going on, but it is a simple question with a simple answer. Moses confirms what he is holding, not simply to God, but to himself. "This is a staff in my hand; I have carried it about for years," might be what Moses is thinking.

As Scofield points out, a staff or rod, in Scripture, is often indicative of power and authority (Psalm 2:9 11-:2 Revelation 2:27). Cast down (that is, held in the **carnal**, earthly realm, it becomes a serpent striking fear in the hearts of all those under it. Taken up by the man of God, it becomes a rod of God (Exodus 4:20).

Exodus 4:2b **He said, "A rod."**

Moses, walking through the desert-wilderness with his sheep always carried with him a rod (a stick, a crook, a staff). This is standard issue, shepherding equipment, the ubiquitous tool of his trade.

Moses had to walk up and down hills and mountains; over very rocky terrain; and the staff was necessary to help him keep his balance; or even to check rocks in front of them, to make certain that they are stable and steady.

There were human and animal predators and Moses could use his staff in a pinch to ward off either. It could be used to beat and to keep any wild animal at bay.

Thirdly, a staff is an extension of the shepherd's arm, so he might use it to guide the sheep in the proper direction. Sheep were continually wanting to wander off on their own, yet having very little by way of innate protection. The shepherd provides them this protection and guidance, often using the staff.

Or, as Bishop Brewer describes it, the staff is for *steadying, protection and correction*.⁸ Let's add to that list, *guidance*. That sounds very much like the Word of God, does it not?

⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 12, 2017.

⁸ From <http://www.cfdiocese.org/bishopsblog/3-tremendous-responsibilities-the-shepherds-staff-represents/> accessed November 13, 2018.

When I leave for work, I have several bags and cases of tools. There is nothing worse than to arrive to work, have a particular job to do, and remembering that particular tool is sitting on a shelf at home. Moses had one necessary tool, and that was his staff. It was always with him; and God will tell him, he needs to keep it with him.

Exodus 4:2 Y^ehowah then said to him, “What [is] that in your hand?” And he answered, “A staff.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:2–3 Jehovah then asked him, “What is that in your hand?” Moses answered, “It is a staff.” So God commanded, “Throw it down on the ground.” Therefore, Moses threw the staff onto the ground and it suddenly became a serpent. Suddenly frightened, Moses ran from it. (Kukis paraphrase)

It may not have occurred to you that Moses carrying a staff when he goes in to speak to Pharaoh is actually kind of a weird thing. But that is necessary for what he is going to do. Let’s say that I went to a party, but I carried a hammer with me (or a nail gun, as I rarely use hammers anymore). That would look a bit odd; people at the party might even avoid me. So it will seem to Pharaoh and his attendants when they see Moses and Aaron walk in, and Moses is carrying a staff.

Exodus 4:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
’amar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
shâlak ^e (שלך) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>throw, cast, fling, throw off, cast away [off]; shed; reject; cast about; cast down, overthrow</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #7993 BDB #1020
’erets (ארץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earthward (all or a portion thereof), on [toward, upon] the earth [ground]; on [upon, toward] the land [territory, country, continent; ground, soil]</i>	feminine singular noun with the directional hê	Strong’s #776 BDB #75

Translation: So God commanded, “Throw it to the ground.”

The God commands Moses to throw his staff onto the ground.

Exodus 4:3b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlak ^e (שָׁלַךְ) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to throw, to cast, to fling, to throw off, to cast away [off]; to shed; to reject; to cast about; to cast down, to overthrow</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7993 BDB #1020
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earthward (all or a portion thereof), on [toward, upon] the earth [ground]; on [upon, toward] the land [territory, country, continent; ground, soil]</i>	feminine singular noun with the directional hê	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: He threw it on the ground...

Whereas, Moses is quite unsure about God's commands for him to go to Egypt, speak to Pharaoh, and then bring the people of Jacob out—this command seems pretty simple. "Throw your staff onto the ground." And Moses does so. He follows God's directions to the t.

Exodus 4:3c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
When the object of this verb is preceded by the lâmed preposition, hâyâh often means <i>to become [something that it was not before]</i> .			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâchâsh (נָחָשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-KHAWSH</i>]	<i>serpent, snake; image (of serpent); fleeing serpent (mythological)</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5175 BDB #638

The NET Bible: *The details of the verse are designed to show that there was a staff that became a snake. The question is used to affirm that there truly was a staff, and then the report of Moses running from it shows it was a genuine snake. Using the serpent as a sign would have had an impact on the religious ideas of Egypt, for the sacred cobra was one of their symbols.*⁹

⁹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 12, 2017.

Translation: ...and it became a serpent.

The thing which, only seconds ago, was Moses' trusty staff, is suddenly a serpent.

One of the things which is fascinating about miracles in the Bible, is that they are always crowd-specific. When dealing with nation Egypt, there will be plagues of locusts and the Nile River will turn blood-red, but for Moses (and, later on, for Pharaoh's court) a walking staff becomes a serpent. God uses entirely appropriate miracles; and often miracles which say something or mean something.

I don't know if there is any underlying message that we should read into the text, based upon this being a serpent.

Exodus 4:3d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nûwç (נוּ) [pronounced <i>noose</i>]	<i>to flee, to flee from, to escape, to depart, to retreat, to hasten quickly [away]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5127 BDB #630
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>mihn</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, min pânîym and a suffix mean *from before his face, out from before his face, from him, from one's presence*. However, together, they can also be a reference to the cause, whether near or remote, and can therefore be rendered *because of him, by him*.

Translation: Moses fled from it.

Moses is understandably startled and he runs from this snake.

Moses knows and just affirmed that he was holding his staff; and now he runs from it, as it has become a snake.

Some might think that perhaps this is all in Moses' mind; but Scripture tells us that his staff became a snake.

Exodus 4:3 So God commanded, "Throw it to the ground." He threw it on the ground and it became a serpent. Moses fled from it. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:3 **And He [God] said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. (NKJV)**

God tells Moses to throw his staff onto the ground, and he does. It becomes a snake and Moses runs from it. We may reasonably assume that the snake would be roughly the same length and width as this staff—making it a pretty large snake.

Undoubtedly, this surprises Moses, and frightens him somewhat. You do not have to be afraid of snakes to step back when you see a large snake in front of you, seemingly out of nowhere.

What exactly was extent at that time in terms of the Scriptures, we do not know; and we know even less about what Scriptures Moses was familiar with. Perhaps Moses was aware of a prototype Genesis (from which Moses got his information) existed and possibly Job, or maybe he knew the entire book of Genesis and Job. However, we have no clear indication that Moses had access to either of those books at this time—apart from the references by God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Moses never said, "Who are those guys you keep talking about?").

For the next 40 years, Moses' primary source of revelation will come directly from God. Today, our primary source of revelation (99.99999%) comes from the written word. When someone tells me that God has spoken to them or has spoken to their **heart** or has let them know something, I personally have serious doubts in this area. If we are filled with His Word and filled with the Spirit, we do not require a cloud overhead telling us should we make a right or a left turn. However, at this time, there was very little if any written revelation. There certainly was a system of sacrifice, which taught salvation and **rebound** (definitely the former and very likely the latter). Information about what has happened in history and God's relationship to man over the previous 1000 years or so has been passed down orally.

Exodus 4:2–3 **Y^ehowah then said to him, "What [is] that in your hand?" And he answered, "A staff." So God commanded, "Throw it to the ground." He threw it on the ground and it became a serpent. Moses fled from it. (Kukis mostly literal translation)**

Although Moses lived in the **Jewish Age**, he is alive in the first period of the Jewish Age before the existence of nation Israel. Moses will lead what is more or less a people out of Egypt toward the land of Canaan; but he will not rule over them as an actual nation with a plot of ground and borders.

What Was the Spiritual Life in the Day of Moses?

1. We may assume that there are constants in the spiritual life, true then as now. There is naming our sins to God in order to be restored to temporal **fellowship**; and learning the Word of God, so that we can think like God thinks.
2. Animal sacrifices, which speak of Jesus dying for us on the cross.
3. Circumcision seems to have been a requirement for the Jews; but less so outside of the Jewish culture (recall that Moses originally left for Egypt and was suddenly stopped because one of his sons had not been circumcised).
4. There appear to be a number of laws and customs understood by many cultures as being right and good. In the general era of Moses, there were several examples that we are aware of where kings made an attempt to define a set of behaviors which are acceptable and which are not.
5. Once God gives **the Law** to the Jewish people, it will become fundamental to their lives as believers.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Exodus 4:2–3 **Jehovah then asked him, "What is that in your hand?" Moses answered, "It is a staff." So God commanded, "Throw it down on the ground." Therefore, Moses threw the staff onto the ground and it suddenly became a serpent. Suddenly frightened, Moses ran from it. (Kukis paraphrase)**

Moses' father-in-law has certainly passed on to Moses whatever he knew and Moses has experienced some growth. As unusual as this might sound, it is important to realize that we have the opportunity to know more and have an impact equal to Moses in God's history because we have the entire Word of God and the opportunity to know the entire Word of God. Moses is speaking directly, face-to-face with the living God, Jesus Christ, and he is telling Him, "I don't know; I don't think Your idea is going to work. I think that Your plan has several flaws." Because of the lack of divine revelation in Moses' **soul** God will have to work with Moses using some **signs and wonders**. Afterwards, as Moses becomes further and further entrenched in His Word (this will be by divine revelation and by writing God's Word) there will be fewer and fewer signs for Moses himself. However, there will be a great many signs for the children of Israel.

This is a fascinating sentence structure, which puts us into the moment. God tells Moses to grab the serpent by the tail, and then Moses does this, and God explains why—so, what Moses does occurs while God is speaking to him.

And so says Y^ehowah unto Moses, “Put out your hand and take [it] in the tail—” —and so he stretches out his hand and so he seized in him and so he is for a staff in his hand. “—so that they are caused to believe that has appeared unto you Y^ehowah, Elohim of their fathers, Elohim of Abraham, Elohim of Isaac and Elohim of Jacob.”

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4:4–5

Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take [it] by the tail—” So he stretched out his hand and he seized it and it became a staff [again] in his hand. “—so that they will be caused to believe that Y^ehowah has appeared to you—(Y^ehowah) the Elohim of their fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac and the Elohim of Jacob.”

Then Jehovah said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and grab it by the tail—” So when Moses seized the serpent, it became a staff again in his hand. “—this is so they will be caused to believe that Jehovah has appeared to you—Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Y ^e howah unto Moses, “Put out your hand and take [it] in the tail—” —and so he stretches out his hand and so he seized in him and so he is for a staff in his hand. “—so that they are caused to believe that has appeared unto you Y ^e howah, Elohim of their fathers, Elohim of Abraham, Elohim of Isaac and Elohim of Jacob.”
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum of Onkelos	And the Lord said to Mosheh, Stretch forth thy hand and seize it by its tail; and he put forth his hand and grasped it, and it became a rod in his hand. That they may believe that the Lord god of their fathers hath been revealed to thee, that God of Abraham, the God of Izhak, and the God of Jakob.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the Lord said to Mosheh, Stretch forth thy hand and seize (it) by its tail. [JERUSALEM. And grasp the place of its tail.] And he stretched forth his hand and grasped it, and it became the rod in his hand: ?In order that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Izhak, and the God of Jakob, hath revealed Himself to thee.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And the Lord said: Put out thy hand and take it by the tail. He put forth his hand, and took hold of it, and it was turned into a rod. That they may believe, saith he, that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared to thee.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mar-Yah said to Mosha, "Put forth your hand, and take it by the tail." He put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand. "That they may

believe that Mar-Yah, God of their fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Ya'aqub, has appeared to you."

Peshitta (Syriac) And the LORD said to Moses, Put forth your hand and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand; This is done 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.

Septuagint (Greek) And the Lord said to Moses, Stretch forth your hand, and take hold of its tail: so he stretched forth his hand and took hold of the tail, and it became a rod in his hand,-- that they may believe you, that the God of your fathers has appeared to you, the God of Abraam, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English And the Lord said to Moses, Put out your hand and take it by the tail: *and he put out his hand and took a grip of it and it became a rod in his hand:* So that they may be certain that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has been seen by you.

Easy English

Easy-to-Read Version–2006 Moses ran from it, but the LORD said to him, "Reach out and grab the snake by its tail."

When Moses reached out and caught the snake's tail, the snake became a walking stick again. Then God said, "Use your stick in this way, and the people will believe that you saw the Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." A portion of v. 3 is included for context.

Good News Bible (TEV) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach down and pick it up by the tail." So Moses reached down and caught it, and it became a walking stick again. The LORD said, "Do this to prove to the Israelites that the Lord, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to you."

The Message

GOD said to Moses, "Reach out and grab it by the tail." He reached out and grabbed it—and he was holding his staff again. "That's so they will trust that GOD appeared to you, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Names of God Bible

Then **Yahweh** said to Moses, "Reach out and grab the snake by its tail." He reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a staff as he held it. The LORD explained, "This is to convince the people that **Yahweh Elohim** of their ancestors, the **Elohim** of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, appeared to you."

NIRV

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach your hand out. Take the snake by the tail." So he reached out and grabbed the snake. It turned back into a walking stick in his hand. The LORD said, "When they see this sign, they will believe that I appeared to you. I am the Lord, the God of their fathers. I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. And I am the God of Jacob."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. "Pick it up by the tail!" the LORD told him. And when Moses did this, the snake turned back into a walking stick.

"Do this," the LORD said, "and the Israelites will believe that you have seen me, the God who was worshiped by their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

The Living Bible

Then the Lord told him, "Grab it by the tail!" He did, and it became a rod in his hand again!

“Do that and they will believe you!” the Lord told him. “Then they will realize that Jehovah, the God of their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has really appeared to you.

New Berkeley Version
New Century Version

So Moses threw it on the ground, and it became a snake. Moses ran from the snake, but the LORD said to him, “Reach out and grab the snake by its tail.” When Moses reached out and took hold of the snake, it again became a stick in his hand. The Lord said, “This is so that the Israelites will believe that the LORD appeared to you. I am the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” V. 3 is included for context.

New Life Version

But the Lord said to Moses, "Put out your hand and take it by its tail." So Moses put out his hand and caught it. And it became a stick in his hand. The Lord said, "By seeing this they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has shown Himself to you."

New Living Translation

Then the LORD told him, “Reach out and grab its tail.” So Moses reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a shepherd’s staff in his hand.

“Perform this sign,” the LORD told him. “Then they will believe that the LORD, the God of their ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—really has appeared to you.”

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible

Then the Lord told Moses: 'Now, reach out and grab it by the tail.'

So [Moses] reached out and grabbed it by the tail, and it became a walking stick in his hand once again. [And God continued]: 'That's why they will believe you when you say that the God of your ancestors has appeared to you... the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob.'

Beck's American Translation

International Standard V

Then God told Moses, “Reach out [Lit. *Stretch out your hand*] and grab its tail.” So he reached out, grabbed it, and it became a staff [Or *rod*] in his hand. God said, “I’ve done this [The Heb. lacks *God said, “I have done this*] so that they may believe that the LORD God of their ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you.”

New Advent (Knox) Bible

Now put out thy hand, the Lord said, and catch it by the tail. He did so, and it turned to a staff in his hand. And the word came to him, Will they still doubt that the Lord God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has appeared to thee?

Translation for Translators

But Yahweh said to Moses/me, “Reach down and pick it up by its tail!” So he/I reached down and caught it, and *when he/I picked it up*, it became a stick in his/my hand *again*.

Yahweh said, “ *Do the same thing in front of the Israeli people*, in order that they may believe that *I*, Yahweh God, the one Abraham and Isaac and Jacob worshiped, truly appeared to you.”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible

Jehovah was to say to Moses: Be sending out your hand, and be grasping hold of it by the tail. He was to send out his hand, and was to take strong hold of it, even is it to become a staff in his hand. That they were to give credit, that Jehovah, he of mighty ones of their fathers, he of mighty ones of Abraham, he of mighty ones of Isaac, and he of migty ones of Jacob, is to have appeared to you.

Conservapedia

But the LORD said to Moses, "Grab it with your hand, by its tail." So he grabbed it with his hand and held onto it, and it became a rod in the palm of his hand. "This will make them believe that the LORD God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to you."

Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But the EVER-LIVING said to Moses " Stretch out your hand and seize it by the tail." So he stretched out his hand and seized it, and it became a stick in his hand. " Be certain they will believe because of that, that the EVER-LIVING God of their fathers appeared to you,— the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."
HCSB	Moses ran from it, but the Lord told him, "Stretch out your hand and grab it by the tail." So he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand. "This will take place," He continued, "so they will believe that Yahweh, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." A portion of v. 3 is included for context.
NIV, ©2011	Then the Lord said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. "This," said the Lord, "is so that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Yahweh said, "Take it by the tail." Moses took it and it was again a staff in his hand. Then Yahweh said, "With such signs they may believe that Yahweh, the God of your fathers, appeared to you."
The Heritage Bible	And Jehovah said to Moses, Send out your hand, and seize it by the tail. And he sent out his hand, and seized it, and it became a rod in his palm, So that they may believe that Jehovah God of their fathers has appeared to you, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.
New American Bible (2002)	"Now, put out your hand," the LORD said to him, "and take hold of its tail." So he put out his hand and laid hold of it, and it became a staff in his hand. "This will take place so that they may believe," he continued, "that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, did appear to you."
New American Bible (2011)	Then the LORD said to Moses: Now stretch out your hand and take hold of its tail. So he stretched out his hand and took hold of it, and it became a staff in his hand. That is so they will believe that the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, did appear to you.
New Jerusalem Bible	Yahweh then said to Moses, 'Reach out your hand and catch it by the tail.' He reached out his hand, caught it, and in his hand it turned back into a staff. 'Thus they may believe that Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.'
Revised English Bible	...but the LORD said, "Put your hand out and seize it by the tail." When he took hold of it, it turned back into a staff in his hand. "This", said the LORD, "is to convince the people that the LORD the God of their forefathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, did appear to you."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then <i>ADONAI</i> said to Moshe, "Put your hand out and take it by the tail." He reached out with his hand and took hold of it, and it became a staff in his hand. "This is so that they will believe that <i>ADONAI</i> , the God of their fathers, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitz'chak and the God of Ya'akov, has appeared to you!"
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yah Veh says to Mosheh, Spread your hand and hold it by the tail. - and he spreads his hand and holds it and it becomes a rod in his palm: so that they trust that Yah Veh Elohim of their fathers,

Hebraic Roots Bible	Elohim of Abraham, Elohim of Yischaq and Elohim of Yaaqov was seen by you. And YAHWEH said to Moses, reach out your hand and take it by the tail. And he sent out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his palm; so that they may believe that YAHWEH the Elohe of their fathers has appeared to you, the Elohe of Abraham, the Elohe of Isaac, and the Elohe of Jacob.
Israeli Authorized Version	And YY said unto Moshe, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand: That they may believe that YY Elohim of their fathers, the Elohim of Avraham, the Elohim of Yitzchak, and the Elohim of Yaakov, hath appeared unto thee.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Then the Lord said to Moses, "Put out your hand and grasp it by the tail"—he put out his hand and seized it, and it became a rod in his hand— "that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, did appear to you."
Kaplan Translation	God said to Moses, 'Reach out and grasp its tail.' When [Moses] reached out and grasped [the snake], it turned back into a staff in his hand. 'This is so that they will believe that God appeared to you,' [He said]. 'The God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Hashem said unto Moshe, Put forth thine yad, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his yad, and caught it, and it became a matteh in his yad; That they may believe that Hashem Elohei Avotam, Elohei Avraham, Elohei Yitzchak, and Elohei Ya'akov, hath appeared unto thee.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and grasp it by the tail." So he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— ["You shall do this," said the LORD,] "so that the elders may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has [most certainly] appeared to you."
The Expanded Bible	The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" Moses answered, "It is my walking stick [staff; ^c representing the presence of God]." The Lord said, "Throw it on the ground." So Moses threw it on the ground, and it became a snake [serpent]. Moses ran [fled] from the snake [serpent], but the Lord said to him, "Reach out [^L Send out your hand] and grab [grasp; catch] the snake [serpent] by its tail." When Moses [^L he] reached out [^L sent out his hand] and took hold of [snatched] the snake [^L it], it again became a stick [staff] in his hand. The Lord said, "This is so that the Israelites [^L they] will believe [trust] that the Lord appeared to you. I am the God of their ancestors [fathers], the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Vv. 2–3 are included for context.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth 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, hath appeared unto thee. The simple shepherd's staff, according to the will of God, became the instrument by which Pharaoh and his land were punished, for the miracle showed that God would deliver His people from the hostile power which was holding it captive. Moses received the commission, the power. to overcome the might, the wickedness of Satan, and this fact could not be hidden from the eyes of the children of Israel: they were bound to acknowledge his call.
NET Bible®	But the Lord said to Moses, "Put out your hand and grab it by the tail" – so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand ⁸ – "that they may

believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”

The Voice **Eternal One:** Reach out and grab it by the tail.
Despite his natural fears, Moses reached out and grabbed the snake; and as he held it, it changed back into a shepherd’s staff.
Eternal One: This *sign* is so the people will believe that I, the God of their fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—have revealed Himself to you.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and "YHWH ^{He Is}" said to "Mosheh ^{Plucked out}", send your hand and take hold (by) his tail, and he sent his hand and he seized him, and he existed (as) a branch in his palm, (so) that they will [support], given that "YHWH ^{He Is}" the "Elohiym ^{Powers}" of their fathers, "Elohiym ^{Powers}" of "Avraham ^{Father lifted}", "Elohiym ^{Powers}" of "Yits'hhaq ^{He laughs}" and "Elohiym ^{Powers}" of "Ya'aqov ^{He restrains}",...

Context Group Version And YHWH said to Moses, Put out your hand, and take it by the tail: (and he put out his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a staff in his hand:) That they may trust YHWH, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.

Green’s Literal Translation NASB . But the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail”—so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— “that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”

New King James Version 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.”

Stuart Wolf Young’s Updated LT . And Jehovah says unto Moses, “Put forth your hand, and lay hold on the tail of it;” and he puts forth his hand, and lays hold on it, and it becomes a rod in his hand— “—so that they believe that Jehovah, God of their fathers, has appeared unto you, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob.”

The gist of this passage: God told Moses to grab the tail of the serpent, which he did, and it became a rod in his hand again. Being able to do this would convince the elders that Moses has actually spoken to God.

Exodus 4:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
’amar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55

Exodus 4:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'el (אל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Mosheh (משה) [pronounced <i>moh- SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
shâlach (שלח) [pronounced <i>shaw- LAKH</i>]	<i>send, send for [forth, away], dismiss, deploy, put forth, stretch out, reach out</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
yâd (יד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âchaz (אחז) [pronounced <i>aw-KHAHZ</i>]	<i>take, grasp, take hold of, seize; take [by hunting, fishing]; hold [something taken]; take possession of</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #270 BDB #28
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
zânâb (זנב) [pronounced <i>zaw-NAWB^v</i>]	<i>tail; end, stump</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2180 BDB #275

Translation: Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take [it] by the tail—” ...

So, Moses has done what God has instructed him to do. He took his staff, he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, startling Moses to the point of running from it. God now tells him to reach out his hand and to grab the serpent by the tail.

Exodus 4:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Exodus 4:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; what is sent (messengers, a message) is implied	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
châzaq (חָזַק) [pronounced khaw-ZAHK]	<i>to take hold [of something], to grab, to seize, to hold fast, to gain [take] possession of; to strengthen, to make strong, to support; to repair; to display strength [power]; to prevail [upon]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #2388 BDB #304
b ^e (בּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

Translation: ... So he stretched out his hand and he seized it...

So, it appears, by the text, that, while God is speaking, Moses just goes ahead and grabs the serpent.

Exodus 4:4c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
When the object of this verb is preceded by the lâmed preposition, hâyâh often means <i>to become [something that it was not before]</i> .			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
maṭṭeh (מַטֵּה) [pronounced maht-TEH]	<i>staff, branch, scepter, rod; branch; tribe</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4294 BDB #641

Exodus 4:4c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

Translation: ...and it became a staff [again] in his hand.

The serpent becomes a staff again after he grabs it.

Exodus 4:4 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),... (NKJV)

Exodus 4:4 Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take [it] by the tail—” So he stretched out his hand and he seized it and it became a staff [again] in his hand... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

God tells Moses to grab the serpent by the tail, which he does, and it becomes a staff once again.

There were two potential stages for this particular set of miracles—before the elders of Israel (to gain credibility as their leader, as a man from God) and before Pharaoh of Egypt (also to gain credibility as a man from God). These miracles would be Moses’ initial *weapons* in this spiritual conflict.

Moses’ staff would become a very important part of the signs and miracles which would occur in Egypt. Often, Moses would use this staff to point to a miracle/sign/plague which was about to happen. Moses was never to be the center of attention. The staff would focus everyone’s attention on what God was about to do. This is, as if to say, “Don’t look at me;” (Moses would say) “Look at where the staff is pointing. That is where God will show His power.”

We have no idea as to the number of elders who would meet with Moses. There would not be an overabundance of elders; and we may reasonably assume that all of them would be able to see these signs that Moses would do. For that reason, I would place the number of elders somewhere between 7 and 30 (and, most likely, between 12 and 15).

These first miracles would be done first before the elders of Israel and then on the very small stage of the royal palace in Egypt. Wherever in the palace where the Pharaoh would meet with individuals, this would take place. So, this would take place among the staff and bodyguards of Pharaoh—maybe as few as 10 people and maybe as many as 50, including any personal servants.

Something like this would seem remarkable to a small audience like this (primarily, this would be to impress Pharaoh). The transformation of a staff into a snake would certainly impress the elders of the Hebrews. Throughout Scripture, God’s miracles are appropriate to the audience. Some miracles were done for a small audience and others would be done for the benefit of all the people of Israel and all the people of Egypt.

God will give Moses just enough to convince the elders of Israel.

Exodus 4:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
l ^e ma'an (למען) [pronounced l ^e -MAH- gahn]	<i>for the sake of, on account of, to the intent of, to the intent that, to the purpose that, in order that, in view of, to the end that; so that</i>	compound preposition and substantive which acts like a preposition	Strong's #4616 BDB #775
This is the substantive ma'an (מַעַן) [pronounced MAH-gahn], which means <i>purpose, intent</i> , combined with the lamed preposition (which is the only way that it is found in Scripture).			
'aman (אמן) [pronounced aw-MAHN]	<i>to stand firm, to believe, to trust, caused to believe</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #539 BDB #52
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
râ'âh (ראה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to be seen, to be visible; to let oneself be seen, to appear; to present oneself; to be provided [cared] for (i.e., looked after)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: ...“—so that they will be caused to believe that Y^ehowah has appeared to you...

Moses apparently has reached out, already, and grabbed the serpent, which transformed back into a staff. And God tells Moses, that this miracle is done so that the elders will take him seriously—so that they will be caused to believe that Y^ehowah has appeared to Moses.

Exodus 4:5b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'âbôwth (אבות) [pronounced aw ^b - VOOTH]	<i>fathers, ancestors, both as the heads of households, clans or tribes; founders, civil leaders, military leaders</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3

Translation:...—(Y^ehowah) the Elohim of their fathers,...

And God repeats what He has already said (back in Exodus 3), that He is the God of their fathers.

Exodus 4:5c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʾAb̄erâhâm (אֲבִרָאָם) [pronounced <i>ahb^{ve}-raw-HAWM</i>]	<i>father of a multitude, chief of a multitude; transliterated Abraham</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #85 BDB #4
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Yis̄châq (יִשְׁחָק) [pronounced <i>yih^s-KHAWK</i>]	<i>he laughs; laughing; transliterated Isaac</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3327 & #3446 BDB #850
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Yaʿăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH^BV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent; heel; and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Translation: ...the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac and the Elohim of Jacob.”

He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So, there is continuity. God made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and now, He begins to fulfill those promises.

God is performing some minor miracles for Moses which will do two things: (1) it will give Moses a place to temporarily place his faith until he becomes more inculcated with God's Word; and (2) it shows Moses what miracles he will be capable of when he meets with his people, the Jews. This way, just in case they do not believe him, Moses will realize that there are certain things that he can do by way of miracles to show that he really did speak with God. Moses is concerned first of all that the Jews will not believe him (Exodus 4:1); and God performs this miracle so that he will see what he is capable of doing before his own people the Jews. These same miracles will also be performed for the Egyptian Pharaoh. As we will see, the elders of the Hebrews will appear to accept Moses immediately (Exodus 4:31) and these signs would be used more extensively later on (Exodus 7:8–13).

The NET Bible: *The signs authenticated Moses' ministry as the Lord's emissary. This sign will show that the Lord had control over Egypt and its stability, over life and death. But first Moses has to be convinced that he can turn it into a dead stick again.*¹⁰

¹⁰ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 12, 2017.

Exodus 4:5 ...“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.” (NKJV)

All of this is about giving Moses credibility with a relatively small number of people as having authority from God. Things will happen after these initial meetings which will confirm that Moses speaks for the God of the Hebrews. This particular miracle essentially gets his foot in the door. The elders will initially accept him.

Signs and Miracles, part II: What we are studying helps us, as students of the Word of God, to understand the purpose of miracles. These miracles often would give credence to the person performing the miracles (or pointing to the miracles—which is mostly what Moses will do before Pharaoh). One might say, these signs and wonders are Moses’ credit card. Because he is able to do these things, people will give him a hearing (first the elders of Israel; secondly, Pharaoh).

Signs and wonders are a means to an end. We often remember the signs and wonders that we read in the Bible because they are amazing, but they are designed with a purpose in mind—which is, to convey God’s will to God’s people.

Believers are often confused about miracles and they think that the Bible is just one chapter of miracles followed by another chapter of miracles, but that is not exactly true. Or, they read about the miracles here in Exodus or about those that Jesus performed, and too often we think, *we should see miracles or we should be able to perform miracles*. Not true.

Miracles, in the Word of God, are generally used for very big events. If there are more than 3 miracles, then usually, what is happening is a very big deal. God does not find Himself bored and then decides, “I need to do some miracles to shake things up.” This is not how God functions.

There are four times in human history where there are a plethora of miracles: (1) when Moses is about to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. By doing this, Moses is going to establish nation Israel. (2) Jesus performs many miracles, because He is the Son of God. These miracles give His Person credibility. There is nothing more important or more fundamental to the believer than Jesus dying for us sins on the cross. This is what Jesus has come to do. (3) The church, an entity separate and different from Israel, is established with a number of miracles and sign gifts. These are very big events in the history of God and man. (4) The next big event where there will be a number of signs will be during the Tribulation.

Today, a **pastor** does not need to establish his authority by speaking in tongues or curing people at the front of the stage, or throwing down his staff and having it turn into a snake (or by picking up deadly snakes and wandering about the church auditorium). The **pastor-teacher** today establishes his authority by his careful and accurate teaching of the Word of God. The believer ought to be able to read the Word of God, listen to the pastor teaching, and then see that these are in congruence with one another (or not). The established authority is the Word of God; and the pastor receives his authority from the Word of God by properly teaching the Word of God.

Today, God’s great power is in His Word; not in a series of miracles. The greatest event in our lives is when we believed in Jesus Christ. We did not see someone perform some cheap slight of hand, and then believed; we heard the gospel—we heard that Jesus Christ died for our sins and opened up the way to God. We responded to the gospel message with faith. Suddenly, we understood that we needed to make this decision, and we did.

Nearly every one of us has seen a magician; and seen that magician perform tricks that we cannot explain. I can guarantee you that people will be far more impressed watching a Penn and Teller live show than seeing some pastor-teacher try to perform a miracle or two. First of all, God has not given pastor-teacher’s the ability to perform miracles; and, even if they could, they would not be anywhere near as impressive as Penn and Teller. Does this mean that we ought to be listening to the teachings of Penn Jillette? Of course not! He’s a nice enough guy, but

he is (if memory serves) an atheist and a libertarian. Neither of those concepts are Biblical. Following either of those approaches to life would be problematic for any believer.

Exodus 4:5 ...“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.” (NKJV)

Exodus 4:5 ...“—so that they will be caused to believe that Y^ehowah has appeared to you—(Y^ehowah) the Elohim of their fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac and the Elohim of Jacob.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This gives us the reason why God has given Moses the power to perform some miracles—so that the people that Moses is in front of will believe that the Lord God has appeared to him.

This is the 4th and final time that God will use this expression (*the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*) in the book of Exodus (Exodus 3:6, 15–16 4:5). In fact, we will not see this title again until Matt. 22:32 (see also Mark 12:26 Luke 20:37 Acts 3:13 7:32). It surprises me how few times we find this phrase in Scripture. However, this expression makes perfect sense if the elders to whom Moses speaks understand the book of Genesis and at least some of the history of the Hebrew people. These words are very meaningful to such people. On the other hand, these words would have no meaning whatsoever to someone who lacks this knowledge (or rejects it). This title for God ties the God of the book of Genesis (a book which is 400 years old at this time) to the God of Moses.

As an aside, *Genesis* is not necessarily a physical book at this time; it may continue to be the recollections of about ten or more saints which was repeated several times a year among the Hebrew people.

Exodus 4:4–5 Then Y^ehowah said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take [it] by the tail—” So he stretched out his hand and he seized it and it became a staff [again] in his hand. “—so that they will be caused to believe that Y^ehowah has appeared to you—(Y^ehowah) the Elohim of their fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac and the Elohim of Jacob.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

In the New Testament, Jesus will constantly tie Himself to the existing Scriptures, which we call the Old Testament today (which means the Old Covenant or the Former Contract).

God speaks of Y^ehowah Elohim of their fathers, which means that Moses will first perform these signs before the elders of the Hebrews, as we read in...

Exodus 4:29–30 Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. (ESV)

Exodus 4:4–5 Then Jehovah said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and grab it by the tail—” So when Moses seized the serpent, it became a staff again in his hand. “—this is so they will be caused to believe that Jehovah has appeared to you—Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Even though the magicians will duplicate what Moses does here, I believe that it will be apparent to them that what he did was of a greater quality. They may still believe it to be a trick, when he does it; but they will realize that he is greater than they are, in this regard. Later, the magicians (or, *religious illusionists*) will admit that Moses can do things which they are unable to.

The original text does something which is quite unusual for the Hebrew—God is speaking, and this is interspersed with things which Moses does while God is speaking.

God is still speaking to Moses out in the desert-wilderness of Midian. It may seem as if we have advanced further into the narrative, but this is because God is telling Moses what to expect. Moses is standing before God, Who has manifested Himself to Moses as a burning bush.

God has given Moses a general outline of what he is going to do and how Pharaoh is going to respond. Nevertheless, Moses has expressed great reticence about doing these things, which is understandable. God has given him a sign to use to convince a small audience; and now God will give Moses another sign.

And so says Y^ehowah to him again, “Take your hand in your chest—” —and so he brings his hand in [by] his chest and so he brings her out from his chest and, behold, his hand is leprous like the snow. And so he says, “Return your hand unto your chest—” and so he returns his hand unto his chest and so he brings her out from his chest and, behold, she returns like his flesh. “And he was if not they believe regarding you and they do not listen to the voice of the sign the first, and they have believed regarding the sign the latter.

Exodus
4:6–8

And again, Y^ehowah said to him, “Take your hand [and place it] by your chest—” So he brought his hand in [by] his chest [under his clothing] and when he brought it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. And God [lit., he] said, “Return your hand to your chest—” —and he returned his hand to his chest [under his clothing] and brought it out from his chest, and saw it was restored as [the color of] his flesh. [And God said,] “And it will be, if they do not believe you and do not give heed regarding the voice of the first sign, then they will believe the voice of the second sign.

And, Jehovah spoke to him, saying, “Place your hand under your clothing next to your chest—” So Moses brought his hand to his chest, and when brought it out again, it was leprous, white as snow. Then God told him, “Return your hand to your chest—” And Moses again placed his hand next to his chest, under his clothing, and then brought it out again, and the normal flesh color of his hand was restored. God then said, “It will come to pass that, if they do not believe the first sign, then they will believe the second sign.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so says Y^ehowah to him again, “Take your hand in your chest—” —and so he brings his hand in [by] his chest and so he brings her out from his chest and, behold, his hand is leprous like the snow. And so he says, “Return your hand unto your chest—” and so he returns his hand unto his chest and so he brings her out from his chest and, behold, she returns like his flesh. “And he was if not they believe regarding you and they do not listen to the voice of the sign the first, and they have believed regarding the sign the latter.

Dead Sea Scrolls
Jerusalem targum

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Put now thy hand into thy breast, and he put his hand within his breast. And if they believe not these two signs, nor receive from thee, thou shalt take of the water of the river and pour it on the ground, and the water that thou shalt take from the river shall become blood upon the ground.

Targum of Onkelos

And the Lord said yet to him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom, and drew it out; and, behold, his hand was white as snow. And He said, Return thy hand into thy bosom. And he returned his hand into his bosom, and drew it out form his bosom, and, behold, it had turned to be as his own flesh. And it shall be, if they will not believe thee nor receive the voice of the first sign, that they shall believe the voice of the latter sign.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And the Lord said to him again, Put now thy hand within thy breast (Choba); and he put it within his breast, and withdrew it, and, behold, his hand was leprous, it was white as snow. And He said, Return thy hand into thy bosom (Aitaph); and he

returned his hand to his breast, and withdrew it from his breast, and it had become clean as his flesh.

Revised Douay-Rheims

And the Lord said again: Put thy hand into thy bosom. And when he had put it into his bosom, he brought it forth leprous as snow.

And he said: Put back thy hand into thy bosom. He put it back, and brought it out again, and it was like the other flesh.

If they will not believe thee, saith he, nor hear the voice of the former sign, they will believe the word of the latter sign.

Aramaic ESV of Peshitta

Mar-Yah said furthermore to him, "Now put your hand inside your cloak." He put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. He said, "Put your hand inside your cloak again." He put his hand inside his cloak again, and when he took it out of his cloak, behold, it had turned again as his other flesh. "It will happen, if they will neither believe you nor listen to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

Peshitta (Syriac)

And the LORD said furthermore to him, again, Put now your hand into your bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. Then the LORD said to him, Put your hand back into your bosom again. And he put his hand back into his bosom; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was clean like his other flesh. And if they will not believe you, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

Septuagint (Greek)

And the Lord said again to him, Put your hand into your bosom; and he put his hand into his bosom, and brought his hand out of his bosom, and his hand became as snow. And he said again, Put your hand into your bosom; and he put his hand into his bosom, and brought his hand out of his bosom, and it was again restored to the complexion of his other flesh. And if they will not believe you, nor listen to the voice of the first sign, they will believe you because of the voice of the second sign.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English

Then the Lord said to him again, Put your hand inside your clothing. And he put his hand inside his robe: and when he took it out it was like the hand of a leper, as white as snow. And he said, Put your hand inside your robe again. And he put his hand into his robe again, and when he took it out he saw that it had become like his other flesh. And if they do not have faith in you or give ear to the voice of the first sign, they will have faith in the second sign..

Easy English

Then the Lord said to Moses: 'Put your hand inside your clothes, near to your heart.' So Moses did this. When he took his hand out again, it had become as white as snow. It was like the hand of a man who had the illness called leprosy.

Then God said: 'Put your hand back inside your clothes, near to your heart.' So Moses did that. And when he took his hand out, it was well again. It was the same as the other parts of his body.

God said, 'They may not believe you. They may not think that the first sign is important. But they may still believe the second sign. 9 But if they will not believe the two signs, you can do something else.

Easy-to-Read Version–2006

Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will give you another proof. Put your hand under your robe."

So Moses opened his robe and put his hand inside. Then he brought his hand out of the robe and it was changed. His hand was covered with spots that were white like snow.

International Children's B.	<p>Then God said, "Now put your hand into your robe again." So Moses put his hand into his robe again. Then he brought his hand out, and his hand was changed. Now his hand was good again, as it was before.</p> <p>Then the Lord said to Moses, "Put your hand inside your coat." So Moses put his hand inside his coat. When he took his hand out, it was white with a harmful skin disease.</p> <p>Then the Lord said, "Now put your hand inside your coat again." So Moses put his hand inside his coat again. When he took it out, his hand was healthy again. It was like the rest of his skin.</p> <p>Then the Lord said, "The people may not believe you or be convinced by the first miracle. They may believe you when you show them this second miracle.</p>
<i>The Message</i>	<p>God then said, "Put your hand inside your shirt." He slipped his hand under his shirt, then took it out. His hand had turned leprous, like snow.</p> <p>He said, "Put your hand back under your shirt." He did it, then took it back out—as healthy as before.</p> <p>"So if they don't trust you and aren't convinced by the first sign, the second sign should do it.</p>
Names of God Bible	<p>Yahweh said to him, "Put your hand inside your shirt." So Moses did this, and when he took his hand out, it had a skin disease. It looked as flaky as snow. "Now put your hand back inside your shirt," Yahweh said. Moses put it back, and when he took it out this time, it was healthy again like the rest of his body.</p> <p>Then the Lord said, "If they won't believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second.</p>
New Simplified Bible	<p>Jehovah spoke to Moses again: »Put your hand inside your robe.« Moses obeyed. When he took his hand out, it was diseased, covered with white spots, like snow. Jehovah said: »Put your hand inside your robe again.« He did so, and when he took it out this time, it was healthy, just like the rest of his body. Jehovah said: »If they will not believe you or be convinced by the first sign, then this one will convince them.</p>

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	<p>Again, the LORD said to Moses, "Put your hand inside your coat." So Moses put his hand inside his coat. When he took his hand out, his hand had a skin disease flaky like snow. Then God said, "Put your hand back inside your coat." So Moses put his hand back inside his coat. When he took it back out again, the skin of his hand had returned to normal. "If they won't believe you or pay attention to the first sign, they may believe the second sign.</p>
Contemporary English V.	<p>Next, the LORD commanded Moses, "Put your hand inside your shirt." Moses obeyed, and when he took it out, his hand had turned white as snow--like someone with leprosy. "Put your hand back inside your shirt," the LORD told him. Moses did so, and when he took it out again, it was as healthy as the rest of his body. V. 8 will be placed with the next passage.</p>
The Living Bible	<p>Now reach your hand inside your robe, next to your chest." And when he did, and took it out again, it was white with leprosy! "Now put it in again," Jehovah said. And when he did, and took it out again, it was normal, just as before! V. 8 will be placed with the next passage.</p>
New Berkeley Version New Life Version	<p>.</p> <p>The Lord said to him, "Put your hand inside your coat." So Moses put his hand inside his coat. When he took it out, his hand had a bad skin disease and was white as snow. Then God said, "Put your hand inside your coat again." So Moses put his hand inside his coat again. When he took it out of his coat, he saw that it had become like his other flesh. God said, "If they will not listen to you or believe you when they are shown the first thing, they may believe when this is shown to them.</p>

New Living Translation Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out again, his hand was white as snow with a severe skin disease. "Now put your hand back into your cloak," the Lord said. So Moses put his hand back in, and when he took it out again, it was as healthy as the rest of his body.
The Lord said to Moses, "If they do not believe you and are not convinced by the first miraculous sign, they will be convinced by the second sign.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Then the Lord told him: 'Now, put your hand inside [your robe and touch] your chest.' So he reached inside and touched his chest; and when he brought his hand out, it was [as white] as snow. Then [the Lord] said: 'Now, put your hand back in and touch your chest once more.' So he reached in and touched his chest, and when he brought it out, its color returned to the regular shade of his flesh.
[And the Lord said]: 'So, if the first sign doesn't make them listen and believe you, the second sign will.

Beck's American Translation .
International Standard V Again the LORD told him, "Put your hand into your bosom [i.e. under the folds of the garment at the chest]." He put his hand into his bosom and as soon as he brought it out it was leprous, like snow [i.e. his hand was white]. Then God [Lit. *He*] said, "Put your hand back into your bosom." He returned it [Lit. *his hand*] to his bosom and as soon as he brought it out [Lit. *out from his bosom*], it was restored like the rest of [The Heb. lacks *the rest of*] his skin [Lit. *flesh*].
"Then if they don't believe you and respond to the first sign, they may respond to the second [Lit. *latter*] sign.

New Advent (Knox) Bible And now the Lord had a fresh command for him, Put thy hand into thy bosom; and, doing so, he found that it came out a leper's hand, white as snow. Now, said he, put it back in thy bosom again; so he put it back, and this time, when he brought it out, the skin on it was no different from the rest of his skin. And the Lord said, If credence and hearing thou canst not gain, with the first sign for thy warrant, the evidence of this second sign will make them believe thee.

Translation for Translators Yahweh spoke to Moses/me again, saying "Put your hand inside your robe [MTY]!" He/I did that. And when he/I took it out again, *surprisingly*, his/my hand was white. It had a skin disease *that made it* as white as snow. Then God said, "Put your hand back inside your robe [MTY]!" So he/I did that, and when he/I took it out again, *surprisingly*, it was normal again, just like the rest of his/my body! God said, "*You can do that in front of the Israeli people, too.* If they do not pay attention to what you say because of *seeing* the first miracle, they will *◀believe you/be convinced▶* when *you perform* the second miracle.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible Jehovah was to say besides: Be putting your hand into your bosom. He was to put his hand into his bosom, and he was to take out his hand; even is it being leprous as snow. He was to say: Be bringing back, a bringing back of your hand into your bosom. He was to bring back, a bringing back of his hand into his bosom, and he was to take it out from his bosom; it is to have turned back to flesh! Were they to give you credit and listen to your loud call, from the first sign? - even are they to have given credit to your loud call, from the latter sign.

Conservapedia And the LORD said more to him: "Put your hand inside your shirt." And he put his hand inside his shirt, and when he took it out, his hand was affected with leprosy, and white like snow. He said, "Put your hand inside your shirt again." And he put his hand inside his shirt again, and brought it out, and it was restored to health, like

the rest of his skin. If they happen not to believe you, and are not convinced by the first sign, they will be convinced by the second." Leprosy, as used here, could be the name of any of a number of skin diseases, and not necessarily Hansen's Disease, caused by the leper's germ *Mycobacterium leprae*.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible	And continuing the EVER-LIVING said to him ; " Put your hand now into your bosom; " so he put his hand into his bosom ; and when he drew it out his hand was leperous like snow ! Then He said, " Replace your hand in your bosom ; " so he replaced his hand in his bosom, and took it out again from his bosom, and it returned like his other flesh. " And it shall be if they will not trust you, and not listen to your voice at the first evidence, yet they will trust to your voice after the second sign.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And the Lord said furthermore unto him: thrust your hand into your bosom. And he thrust his hand into his bosom and took it out. And behold, his hand was leprous even as snow. And he said: put your hand into your bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom, and behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. If they will not believe you neither hear the voice of the first token: yet will they believe the voice of the second token.
Urim-Thummim Version	YHWH also said to him, "Put now your hand into your bosom". so he put his hand into his bosom and when he took it out his hand was leprous as snow. Then He said, Put your hand into your bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again and brought it out of his bosom and it was restored again as his normal flesh. Now if they will not believe you or listen to the herald of the first sign, then they will believe the herald of the latter sign.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Again Yahweh said to him, "Put your hand on your chest." He put his hand on his chest and when he took it away his hand was covered with leprosy, white as snow. And God said, "Put your hand back on your chest." So he put it back, and when he took it away again, his hand was healthy like the rest of his body. Yahweh added, "If they don't believe you and are not convinced by the first sign, they will believe you when they see the second.
The Heritage Bible	And Jehovah said again to him, Bring now your hand into your bosom. And he brought his hand into his bosom, and he brought it out, and behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Return your hand into your bosom; and he returned his hand into his bosom, and brought it out of his bosom; and behold, it turned back as his other flesh. And it shall be, if they will not believe you, and will not attentively hear the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.
New American Bible (2002)	Again the LORD said to him, "Put your hand in your bosom." He put it in his bosom, and when he withdrew it, to his surprise his hand was leprous, like snow. The LORD then said, "Now, put your hand back in your bosom." Moses put his hand back in his bosom, and when he withdrew it, to his surprise it was again like the rest of his body. "If they will not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, they should believe the message of the second.
New American Bible (2011)	Again the LORD said to him: Put your hand into the fold of your garment. So he put his hand into the fold of his garment, and when he drew it out, there was his hand covered with scales, like snowflakes. Then God said: Put your hand back into the fold of your garment. So he put his hand back into the fold of his garment, and when he drew it out, there it was again like his own flesh. If they do not believe you or pay attention to the message of the first sign, they should believe the message of the second sign.
New Jerusalem Bible	Next, Yahweh said to him, 'Put your hand inside your tunic.' He put his hand inside his tunic, then drew it out again: and his hand was diseased, white as snow. Yahweh then said, 'Put your hand back inside your tunic.' He put his hand back inside his tunic and when he drew it out, there it was restored, just like the rest of

his flesh. 'Even so: should they not believe you nor be convinced by the first sign, the second sign will convince them;...

New RSV

Again, the Lord said to him, 'Put your hand inside your cloak.' He put his hand into his cloak; and when he took it out, his hand was leprous [A term for several skin diseases; precise meaning uncertain], as white as snow. Then God said, 'Put your hand back into your cloak'—so he put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored like the rest of his body— 'If they will not believe you or heed the first sign, they may believe the second sign.

Revised English Bible

Then the LORD said to him, "Put your hand inside the fold of your cloak." He did so, and when he drew his hand out the skin was white as snow with disease. The LORD said, "Put your hand in again"; he did so, and when he drew it out this time it was as healthy as the rest of his body. "Now," said the LORD, "if they do not believe you and do not accept the evidence of the first sign, they may be persuaded by the second.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

Furthermore *ADONAI* said to him, "Now put your hand inside your coat." He put his hand in his coat; and when he took it out his hand was leprous, as white as snow. Then God said, "Now put your hand back in your coat." He put his hand back in his coat; and when he took it out, it was as healthy as the rest of his body. "If they won't believe you or heed the evidence of the first sign, they will be convinced by the second.

exeGesés companion Bible

And again Yah Veh says to him,
Put, I beseech you, your hand into your bosom.
- and he puts his hand into his bosom:
and when he takes it out, behold,
his hand is leprous as snow.
And he says,
Return your hand into your bosom.
- and he returns his hand into his bosom;
and plucks it from his bosom
and behold, it returns as his flesh.
And so be it, if they neither trust you,
nor hearken to the voice of the first sign,
that they trust the voice of the latter sign:...

JPS (Tanakh—1985)

The Lord said to him further, "Put your hand into your bosom." He put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, his hand was encrusted with snowy scales! And He said, "Put your hand back into your bosom."—He put his hand back into his bosom; and when he took it out of his bosom, there it was again like the rest of his body.— "And if they do not believe you or pay heed to the first sign, they will believe the second.

Kaplan Translation

God then said to Moses, 'Place your hand [on your chest] inside your robe.'
When [Moses] placed his hand in his robe and removed it from his chest, it was leprous, [as white] as snow.
'Place your hand in your robe again,' said [God].
[Moses] placed his hand [back] into his robe, and when he removed it from his chest, his skin had returned to normal.
'If they do not believe you,' [said God], 'and they do not pay attention to the first miraculous sign, then they will believe the evidence of the second sign.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Hashem said furthermore unto him, Put now thine yad into thy kheyk. And he put his yad into his kheyk; and when he took it out, hinei, his yad was leprous as snow.

And He said, Put thine yad into thy kheyk again. And he put his yad into his kheyk again; and plucked it out of his kheyk, and, hinei, it was turned again as his other basar.

And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither pay heed to the voice of haOt Harishon, that they will believe the voice of haOt haAcharon.

The Scriptures 1998

And הוה said to him again, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, and see, 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 see, it was restored like his other flesh. "And it shall be, if they do not believe you, nor listen to the voice of the first sign, they shall believe the voice of the latter sign.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

The LORD also said to him, "Put your hand into your robe [where it covers your chest]." So he put his hand into his robe, and when he took it out, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. Then God said, "Put your hand into your robe again." So he put his hand back into his robe, and when he took it out, it was restored [and was] like the rest of his body. "If they will not believe you or pay attention to the evidence of the first sign, they may believe the evidence of the second sign.

The Expanded Bible

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Put your hand inside your ·coat [cloak; ^Lbosom]." So Moses put his hand inside his ·coat [cloak; ^Lbosom]. When he took it out, it was ·white [^Llike snow] with ·a skin disease [^Tleprosy; ^Cthe word is used for a variety of skin diseases].

Then he said, "Now put your hand inside your ·coat [cloak; ^Lbosom] again." So Moses put his hand inside his ·coat [cloak; ^Lbosom] again. When he took it out [^Lof his coat/cloak/bosom], ·his hand was healthy again, like the rest of his skin [^Lit was restored like his flesh].

Then the Lord said, "If the people do not ·believe [trust] you or ·pay attention to [listen to the evidence of] the first ·miracle [sign], they may ·believe [trust] you when you show them this second ·miracle [sign].

Kretzmann's Commentary

And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow, infected with the white leprosy, Lev_13:3. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. Thereby the Lord signified that He intended to cleanse His people, the children of Israel, of the spiritual leprosy of sin by the sacrifices and purifications which typified the cleansing through the redemption of Christ. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, to its unmistakable evidence, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

NET Bible®

The Lord also said to him, "Put your hand into your robe." So he put his hand into his robe, and when he brought it out – there was his hand, leprous like snow! He said, "Put your hand back into your robe." So he put his hand back into his robe, and when he brought it out from his robe – there it was, restored [*Heb* "it returned."] like the rest of his skin [*Heb* "like his flesh."!] "If [*Heb* "and it will be if."] they do not believe you or pay attention to [*Heb* "listen to the voice of," meaning listen so as to respond appropriately.] the former sign, then they may believe the latter sign [*Heb* "believe the voice of the latter sign," so as to understand and accept the meaning of the event.].

The Voice

Eternal One: Now for the second sign. Put your hand on your chest inside your shirt.

Moses did as the Eternal instructed; and when he pulled his hand out, his hand was covered with some disease that made it look as white as snow.

Eternal One: Put your hand back inside your clothes.

Moses again did as He instructed, and when he removed his hand from his shirt, it returned *to normal* like the rest of his skin.

Eternal One: If they refuse to believe you, and are not persuaded after *you perform* the first sign, perhaps they will be after the second sign.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and "YHWH ^{He Is}" said to him yet again, please [bring] your hand in your bosom, and he [brought] his hand in his bosom, and he made her go out, and look, his hand was being infected like the snow, and he said, make your hand turn back to your bosom, and he made his hand turn back to his bosom, and he made her go out from his bosom, and look, she turned back like his flesh, and (it) will (come to pass) , if they will not [support] you, and they will not hear the voice of the first sign and they will not [support] the voice of the last sign,...

Darby Translation And Jehovah said moreover to him, Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom, and took it out, and behold, his hand was leprous, as snow. And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again, and took it out of his bosom, and behold, it was turned again as his flesh. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the other sign.

Green's Literal Translation
Modern English Version .
The Lord said furthermore to him, "Now put your hand into your bosom." He put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, his hand was as leprous as snow. He said, "Put your hand into your bosom again." So he put his hand into his bosom again and brought it out of his bosom, and it was restored like his other flesh. "If they will not believe you, nor listen to the voice of the first sign, then they may believe the voice of the latter sign.

NASB The LORD furthermore said to him, "Now put your hand into your bosom." So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then He said, "Put your hand into your bosom again." So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like *the rest of* his flesh. "If they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign.

New European Version Yahweh said furthermore to him, Now put your hand inside your cloak. He put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. He said, Put your hand inside your cloak again. He put his hand inside his cloak again, and when he took it out of his cloak, behold, it had turned again as his other flesh. It will happen, if they will neither believe you nor listen to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

Stuart Wolf
Young's Updated LT .
And Jehovah says to him again, "Put in, I pray you, your hand into your bosom;" and he puts in his hand into his bosom, and he brings it out, and lo, his hand is leprous as snow; and He says, "Put back your hand unto your bosom;" and he puts back his hand unto his bosom, and he brings it out from his bosom, and lo, it has turned back as his flesh— "—and it has come to pass, if they do not give credence to you, and hearken not to the voice of the first sign, that they have given credence to the voice of the latter sign.

The gist of this passage: God gives Moses another sign which he could use. This second sign should convince those the first sign did not convince.

I think there is a mistake somewhere in the exegesis of v. 6.

Exodus 4:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'ôwd (דוּעַ) [pronounced <i>gohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
bôw' (אָוַב) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>take in, bring [near, against, upon], come in with, carry, cause to come [in], gather, bring to pass</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #935 BDB #97
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
chêyq (חַיֵּק אוֹ קַיֵּ) [pronounced <i>khayk</i>]	<i>bosom, chest; hollow [portion of a chariot], lower [bottom] [portion of the altar]; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2436 BDB #300

Translation: And again, Y^ehowah said to him, “Take your hand [and place it] by your chest—”...

The first sign, which Moses would be given the ability to use, is changing his walking stick into a snake and then back again. This will be the second sign/power for Moses to use before his people and before Pharaoh.

God is working with Moses, allowing him to do some signs which would indicate to the elders (and to Pharaoh) that God is with him. Notice how these two signs are ideally suited for a small group of people. In a group of 100 or more people, most of them would not appreciate what Moses does (unless he is given a “center stage” position among them).

Like before, the words of God will be intermingled with the actions of Moses, taken in obedience to God's orders.

Exodus 4:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹ) [pronounced boh]	<i>to take in, to bring [near, against, upon], to come in with, to carry, to cause to come [in], to gather, to bring to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
chêyq (חַיִּק or חֵיק) [pronounced khayk]	<i>bosom, chest; hollow [portion of a chariot], lower [bottom] [portion of the altar]; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2436 BDB #300

Translation: ... So he brought his hand in [by] his chest [under his clothing]...

So, Moses takes his hand and places it by his chest, under his clothing. Moses has no idea what is about to happen.

Exodus 4:6c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to cause to go out, to lead out, to bring out, to carry out, to draw out, to take out [of money]; to put forth, to lay out, to exact; to promulgate; to produce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
chêyq (חַיִּק or חֵיק) [pronounced khayk]	<i>bosom, chest; hollow [portion of a chariot], lower [bottom] [portion of the altar]; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2436 BDB #300

Exodus 4:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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The NET Bible: *The word כֶּהָךְ (kheq), often rendered “bosom,” refers to the front of the chest and a fold in the garment there where an item could be placed for carrying (see Prov 6:27; 16:33; 21:14). So “into your robe” should be understood loosely here and in v. 7 as referring to the inside of the top front of Moses’ garment. The inside chest pocket of a jacket is a rough modern equivalent.*¹¹

Translation: ...and when he brought it out,...

If God told Moses to take his hand back out, that is not recorded. But Moses does bring his hand out. Perhaps he felt a tingle or a change in his hand, and that caused him to withdraw it suddenly?

Exodus 4:6d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243

Literally, these two words mean *and behold*. An argument could be made that this wâw conjunction plus the demonstrative could be translated *and suddenly...*; or, *and he saw that...*, or, *he observed [that]...*, or, *he realized [that]...* In Gen. 40:16, Owens translates this, *there were*.

yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
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The NET Bible: *The particle הִנֵּה (hinneh) points out the startling or amazing sight as if the reader were catching first glimpse of it with Moses.*¹²

tsâra' (עָרָא) [pronounced tsah-RAWḤ]	<i>an epidermal disorder [or, skin condition]; a leper, leprous; a bruised area</i>	feminine singular, Pual participle	Strong's #6879 BDB #863
kaph or k ^e (כּ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
sheleg (שֶׁלֶג) [pronounced SHEH-leg]	<i>snow</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7950 BDB #1017

¹¹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

¹² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

Exodus 4:6d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>The NET Bible: <i>This sudden skin disease indicated that God was able to bring such diseases on Egypt in the plagues and that only he could remove them. The whitening was the first stage of death for the diseased (Num 12:10; 2 Kgs 5:27). The Hebrew words traditionally rendered "leprous" or "leprosy," as they are used in Lev 13 and 14, encompass a variety of conditions, not limited to the disease called leprosy and identified as Hansen's disease in modern times.</i>¹³</p>			

Translation: ...behold, his hand was leprous like snow.

Once Moses removes his hand from next to his chest, his hand has turned leprous, like snow.

Apparently, there were quite a number of skin diseases which the people of that era suffered.

Exodus 4:6 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. (NKJV)

Following the Lord's directions, Moses puts his hand under his cloak, brings it out, and it is leprous; white like snow.

Exodus 4:6 And again, Y^howah said to him, "Take your hand [and place it] by your chest—" So he brought his hand in [by] his chest [under his clothing] and when he brought it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

There are some things which God does which align with the laws of science; and there are some things which God does which are in opposition to the laws of science. In Scripture, these different sorts of signs are never distinguished. One can make the argument that some of the plagues of God in the book of Exodus, are a result of a set of natural phenomenon set into motion by God—how much of these plagues should be understood as supernatural and how much is a set of natural events is certainly debatable. There are some cures done by Jesus which could have a scientific basis. However, the Bible never breaks down these signs into two groups, natural and miraculous (or, *anti-natural*).

What is happening right here is clearly miraculous; Moses' hand is truly leprous. This is not a vision, not sleight of hand, but an actual physiological change that takes place.

Exodus 4:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

¹³ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

Exodus 4:7a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>cause to return, bring, be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, return something, restore, bring back, send back, regain, recover, make restitution, reconsider, think again, be caused to return</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
chêyq (חַיִּךְ or חֵיק) [pronounced khayk]	<i>bosom, chest; hollow [portion of a chariot], lower [bottom] [portion of the altar]; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2436 BDB #300

Translation: And God [lit., he] said, “Return your hand to your chest—”...

Then God tells Moses to place his hand back under his clothing next to his chest.

As an aside, there are a number of verbs and prepositions found in this passage, and their usage here would have been very helpful in order to figure out what they mean. Some of them are clearly synonyms; some of them are antonyms in action, and this passage gives us all that information.

Exodus 4:7b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to cause to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to send back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

Exodus 4:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
chêyq (חַיִּק or חֵיק) [pronounced khayk]	<i>bosom, chest; hollow [portion of a chariot], lower [bottom] [portion of the altar]; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2436 BDB #300

Translation: ...—and he returned his hand to his chest [under his clothing]...

So, Moses does what he has been instructed to do. He slips his leprous hand under his clothing next to his chest.

Exodus 4:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to cause to go out, to lead out, to bring out, to carry out, to draw out, to take out [of money]; to put forth, to lay out, to exact; to promulgate; to produce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
chêyq (חַיִּק or חֵיק) [pronounced khayk]	<i>bosom, chest; hollow [portion of a chariot], lower [bottom] [portion of the altar]; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2436 BDB #300

Translation: ...and brought it out from his chest,...

Then Moses brought his hand out from under his clothing—my guess is, he did this without being prompted.

Exodus 4:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Exodus 4:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
Literally, these two words mean <i>and behold</i> . An argument could be made that this wâw conjunction plus the demonstrative could be translated <i>and suddenly...</i> ; or, <i>and he saw that...</i> , or, <i>he observed [that]...</i> , or, <i>he realized [that]...</i> In Gen. 40:16, Owens translates this, <i>there were</i> .			
The NET Bible: <i>The particle הִנֵּה (hinneh) points out the startling or amazing sight as if the reader were catching first glimpse of it with Moses.</i> ¹⁴			
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced <i>shoo^bv</i>]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
bâsâr (בָּשָׂר) [pronounced <i>baw-SAWR</i>]	<i>flesh; body; animal meat</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1320 BDB #142

Translation: ...and saw it was restored as [the color of] his flesh.

Moses may have felt a change, and automatically taken his hand out, to find that it has been restored to its normal coloration.

Exodus 4:7 **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.** (NKJV)

When Moses places his hand under his cloak and brings it out again, God undoes whatever He did in the first place. All signs of leprosy are removed.

The heart is what we *are* and the hand is what we *do* as a result of what we are. Moses had both a corrupt and an honorable heart; when he put his hand near his heart and took it out, what was revealed was his dishonorable, leprous heart; a heart filled with excuses and negative volition. However, Moses was also saved and he clearly did have some doctrine (that is, knowledge of God and His plan). So when he put his hand back inside his cloak it came out whole again. Jesus actually teaches about this issue in Luke 6:43-45.

Luke 6:43–45 **"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.** (ESV)

¹⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

These miracles, first and foremost, are simply designed to impress Moses enough to give him the courage to do what God has told him to do. As amazing as it may seem, this will not be enough to convince Moses to completely trust God and to go ahead with His plan. Whereas, Moses has certainly had some spiritual preparation, we have no idea exactly how much Scripture he has learned (or even had access to). (I believe that Moses had access to the entire book of Genesis; for a reason I will give in a future lesson).

Moses will, when he receives God's Word on Mount Sinai, become much more grounded and that will prepare him for the forty years of living in the desert with a bunch of spiritual losers (an apt description of **Gen X**, the adults who take part in the exodus).

Exodus 4:7 **And God [lit., he] said, "Return your hand to your chest—" —and he returned his hand to his chest [under his clothing] and brought it out from his chest, and saw it was restored as [the color of] his flesh.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:8a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
Together, ʾîm lô' (אִם לֹא) [pronounced <i>eem low</i>] act as an emphatic affirmative and they mean <i>if not, surely, unless</i> .			
ʾâman (אָמַן) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHN</i>]	<i>to stand firm, to believe, to trust, caused to believe</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #539 BDB #52
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: [And God said,] "And it will be, if they do not believe you..."

God performed to signs, using Moses. The sign of the staff changing into the serpent and back into a staff; and the sign of Moses' hand turning leprous and then becoming normal again.

Exodus 4:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לא or לו) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâma' (שמע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHÇ</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qôwl (קול) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
'ôwth (אוֹת) [pronounced <i>oath</i>]	<i>sign, a distinguishing mark; token, pledge; remembrance; assurance; a miraculous sign; an omen, a warning</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #226 BDB #16
rîshônâh (רִשׁוֹנָה) [pronounced <i>ree-show-NAW</i>]	<i>first [in time, in degree], chief, former [in time], past, ancestors, former things; foremost; beginning</i>	feminine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #7223 BDB #911

Translation: ...and do not give heed regarding the voice of the first sign,...

This is an unusual use of the word qôwl (קול) [pronounced *kohl*], which means, *sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering*. Strong's #6963 BDB #876. There is no indication that there is any sound involved. Perhaps the idea is, this is a *message* as clear as if it were the voice of God? Or, another understanding—and this may be the most accurate way to understand this—Moses goes with a message; Moses goes with a directive; Moses goes speaking the Word of God. Therefore, it is his message that is important, not the signs. The signs get everyone to focus on Moses' authority, and therefore, upon Moses' voice.

Exodus 4:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âman (אמן) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHN</i>]	<i>to stand firm, to believe, to trust, caused to believe</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #539 BDB #52

Exodus 4:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The NET Bible: <i>The nuance of this perfect tense with a vav (ו) consecutive will be equal to the imperfect of possibility – “they may believe.”</i> ¹⁵			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qôwl (קול) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
’ôwth (אוֹת) [pronounced <i>oath</i>]	<i>sign, a distinguishing mark; token, pledge; remembrance; assurance; a miraculous sign; an omen, a warning</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #226 BDB #16
’achărôwn (אַחֲרָיוֹן) [pronounced <i>ah-kha-ROHN</i>]	<i>coming after, behind, later, following, last; end</i>	feminine singular adjective (or substantive) with the definite article	Strong's #314 BDB #30

Translation: ...then they will believe the voice of the second sign.

The second sign is the sign of the leprous hand; and God says they would believe the second sign.

Exodus 4:8 “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. (NKJV)

Exodus 4:8 [And God said,] “And it will be, if they do not believe you and do not give heed regarding the voice of the first sign, then they will believe the voice of the second sign. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

God assures Moses that, if they reject the first sign (the sign of the staff and the snake), that they will believe in the second. You might say that God is sending Moses there with a gun that is loaded with more than one bullet. Therefore, Moses will be able to do all that is necessary to gain an audience to listen to him and to trust that he speaks for God.

Here is what we should get from this: these signs, these miraculous events, are designed in order for Moses to get a hearing. These signs give authority to Moses. These signs are a physical manifestation that Moses has the authority of God behind him. The signs give evidence that Moses has actually spoken with God. Pharaoh and his palace guard, and all of his personal servants will see these things take place—and each time, Moses will have a message: “God says to let His people go out into the desert-wilderness to worship Him.” It is the expression of God’s will that is important. These sign gifts are simply a means to an end; the means by which the Israelites and then the Egyptians will hear the Word of God.

Despite these initial signs, Pharaoh will say, “No” and then Moses will say, “Then God will do this to your land to your people...” Pharaoh’s negative volition will not come as a surprise to Moses, as God warns him about it.

Exodus 4:6–8 And again, Y^ehowah said to him, “Take your hand [and place it] by your chest—” So he brought his hand in [by] his chest [under his clothing] and when he brought it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. And God [lit., *he*] said, “Return your hand to your chest—” —and he returned his hand to his chest [under his clothing] and brought it out from his chest, and saw it was restored as [the color of] his flesh. [And God said,] “And

¹⁵ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

it will be, if they do not believe you and do not give heed regarding the voice of the first sign, then they will believe the voice of the second sign. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:6–8 And, Jehovah spoke to him, saying, “Place your hand under your clothing next to your chest—” So Moses brought his hand to his chest, and when brought it out again, it was leprous, white as snow. Then God told him, “Return your hand to your chest—” And Moses again placed his hand next to his chest, under his clothing, and then brought it out again, and the normal flesh color of his hand was restored. God then said, “It will come to pass that, if they do not believe the first sign, then they will believe the second sign. (Kukis paraphrase)

In reviewing this material, I probably should have placed vv. 8 and 9 together. I will do that for a few translations, to give you the flow of these two verses.

Then God would give Moses a sign which a much larger group could see and appreciate.

And he was if they do not believe even to two of the signs the these and they will not listen to your voice, and so you have taken from waters of the River and you have poured [it upon] the dry ground, and has been the waters which you are taking from the River and they have become for blood in the dry ground.”

Exodus
4:9

And it is, if they do not believe even these two signs and they will not listen to your voice, then you will take water from the Nile and you will pour [it upon] dry ground, and it will be [that] the water which you have taken from the Nile, it will become blood on the dry ground.”

Let’s say that they do not believe these two signs and refuse to listen to your voice, then you will take some water from the Nile River and pour it upon dry ground, and this water will become blood on the dry ground.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And he was if they do not believe even to two of the signs the these and they will not listen to your voice, and so you have taken from waters of the River and you have poured [it upon] the dry ground, and has been the waters which you are taking from the River and they have become for blood in the dry ground.”
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum of Onkelos	. But if they will not believe either of these two signs, nor receive from thee, take of the water that is in the river, and pour it upon the ground; and the water which thou takest from the river shall become blood upon the ground.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan) Jerusalem targum	. And if they believe not these two signs, nor receive from thee, thou shalt take of the water of the river and pour it on the ground, and the water that thou shalt take from the river shall become blood upon the ground. V. 8 is included for context.
Revised Douay-Rheims	But if they will not even believe these two signs, nor hear thy voice: take of the river water, and pour it out upon the dry land, and whatsoever thou drawest out of the river shall be turned into blood.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	It will happen, if they will not believe even these two signs, neither listen to your voice, that you shall take of the water of the river, and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take out of the river will become blood on the dry land.”
Peshitta (Syriac)	And if they will not believe also these two signs, neither listen to you voice, you shall take some of the water of the river and pour it upon the dry land; and the water which you take from the river shall become blood upon the dry land.

Septuagint (Greek) And it shall come o pass if they will not believe you for these two signs, and will not listen to your voice, that you shall take of the water of the river and pour it upon the dry land, and the water which you shall take from the river shall be blood upon the dry land.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English And if they have no faith even in these two signs and will not give ear to your voice, then you are to take the water of the Nile and put it on the dry land: and the water you take out of the river will become blood on the dry land.

Easy English If they do not listen to you, then take some water from the River Nile. Pour it on the dry ground. The water that you take from the river will become blood on the ground.’
These signs would show the Israelites that Moses has the power of God.

Easy-to-Read Version–2006 Then God said, “If the people don’t believe you when you use your walking stick, then they will believe you when you show them this sign. If they still refuse to believe after you show them both of these signs, then take some water from the Nile River. Pour the water on the ground, and as soon as it touches the ground, it will become blood.” V. 8 is included for context.

Good News Bible (TEV) The LORD said, “If they will not believe you or be convinced by the first miracle, then this one will convince them. If in spite of these two miracles they still will not believe you, and if they refuse to listen to what you say, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the ground. The water will turn into blood.” V. 8 is included for context.

International Children’s B. Then the Lord said, “The people may not believe you or be convinced by the first miracle. They may believe you when you show them this second miracle. After these two miracles they still may not believe or listen to you. Then take some water from the Nile River. Pour it on the dry ground. The water will become blood when it touches the ground.” V. 8 is included for context.

The Message “So if they don’t trust you and aren’t convinced by the first sign, the second sign should do it. But if it doesn’t, if even after these two signs they don’t trust you and listen to your message, take some water out of the Nile and pour it out on the dry land; the Nile water that you pour out will turn to blood when it hits the ground.” V. 8 is included for context.

NIRV Then the Lord said, “Suppose they do not believe you or pay attention to the first sign. Then maybe they will believe the second one. But suppose they do not believe either sign. Suppose they will not listen to you. Then get some water from the Nile River. Pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will turn into blood on the ground.” V. 8 is included for context.

New Simplified Bible »If in spite of these two signs they still will not believe you, and if they refuse to listen to what you say, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the ground. The water will turn into blood.«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible If they won’t believe even these two signs or pay attention to you, then take some water from the Nile River and pour it out on dry ground. The water that you take from the Nile will turn into blood on the dry ground.”

Contemporary English V. Then the LORD said, “If no one believes either of these miracles, take some water from the Nile River and pour it on the ground. The water will immediately turn into blood.” Vv. 8 and 9 are combined here.

The Living Bible “If they don’t believe the first miracle, they will the second,” the Lord said, “and if they don’t accept you after these two signs, then take water from the Nile River and pour it upon the dry land, and it will turn to blood.” V. 8 is included for context.

New Berkeley Version New Century Version	.
New Life Version	Then the Lord said, "If the people do not believe you or pay attention to the first miracle, they may believe you when you show them this second miracle. After these two miracles, if they still do not believe or listen to you, take some water from the Nile River and pour it on the dry ground. The water will become blood when it touches the ground." V. 8 is included for context.
New Living Translation	But they might not believe even these two things or listen to what you say. So then take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. And the water you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."
	The LORD said to Moses, "If they do not believe you and are not convinced by the first miraculous sign, they will be convinced by the second sign. And if they don't believe you or listen to you even after these two signs, then take some water from the Nile River and pour it out on the dry ground. When you do, the water from the Nile will turn to blood on the ground." V. 8 is included for context.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	But if they still won't listen to you or believe after these two signs, then draw some water from the river and pour it out on the dry ground... and the river water will turn into blood.'
Beck's American Translation	.
International Standard Version	.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And if even two signs are not enough to convince them and make them listen to thee, thou hast but to take water from the river and pour it out on the ground; the water thou hast drawn out of the river will turn into blood.
Translation for Translators	If they do not believe you or do what you say, even <i>after you perform</i> those two miracles, get some water from the Nile <i>River</i> and pour it on the ground. <i>When you do that</i> , the water from the river that you pour on the ground will become blood [MTY] (OR, <i>red like</i> blood)."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Were they to give credit to you for these two signs, even were they to listen to your loud call? - You is to have taken out water from the river, and is to have poured it out on the dry ground. The water that was taken out of the river, is to become blood on the dry ground.
Conservapedia	"And if they don't believe either of these signs, and won't listen to you, then you shall take water from the river Nile, and pour it upon dry land, and the water you take out of the Nile shall become blood on the land." This prefigures the Plague Upon the Nile.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But if they do not trust you even for this second evidence, and do not listen to your voice, then take some of the water from the river and pour it out on the dryland, and there the water which you have taken from the river shall become blood on the dry ground."
HCSB	"If they will not believe you and will not respond to the evidence of the first sign, they may believe the evidence of the second sign. And if they don't believe even these two signs or listen to what you say, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the Nile will become blood on the ground." V. 8 is included for context.
Lexham English Bible	{And} if they also do not believe the second of these signs and they will not listen to your voice, [then] you must take water from the Nile and pour [it] onto the dry ground, and the water that you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

Wikipedia Bible Project And it will be, if they will not believe also these two signs, and wilt not listen to your voice--- and you took from the waters of the Nile, and poured it to land; and the waters which you took from the Nile, will become blood on the land.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) .
The Heritage Bible And it shall be, if they will not believe also these two signs, and will not attentively hear your voice, that you shall take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry ground; and the water which you take out of the river shall become blood upon the dry ground.

New American Bible (2002) And if they will not believe even these two signs, nor heed your plea, take some water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water you take from the river will become blood on the dry land."

Revised English Bible But if they are not convinced even by these two signs and will not accept what you say, then fetch some water from the Nile and pour it out on the dry land, and the water from the Nile will turn to blood on the ground."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible But if they aren't persuaded even by both these signs and still won't listen to what you say, then take some water from the river, and pour it on the ground. The water you take from the river will turn into blood on the dry land."

exeGesés companion Bible ...and so be it,
if they neither trust also these two signs,
nor hearken to your voice,
then take of the water of the river
and pour it on the dry:
and the water you take from the river
becomes blood on the dry.

JPS (Tanakh—1985) And if they are not convinced by both these signs and still do not heed you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and it—the water that you take from the Nile—will turn to blood on the dry ground."

Kaplan Translation 'And if they also do not believe these two signs, and still do not take you seriously, then you shall take some water from the Nile and spill it on the ground. The water that you will take from the Nile will turn into blood on the ground.'

Orthodox Jewish Bible And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two otot, neither pay heed unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the mayim of the Nile, and pour it upon the yabashah (dry land); and the mayim which thou takest out of the Nile shall become dahm upon the yabashah.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible But if they will not believe these two signs or pay attention to what you say, you are to take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take out of the river will turn into blood on the dry ground."

The Expanded Bible After these two ·miracles [signs], if they still do not ·believe [trust] or listen to ·you [your voice], take some water from the Nile River and pour it on the dry ground. The water will become blood ·when it touches [on] the ground."

Kretzmann's Commentary And it shall come 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 (Nile), and pour it upon the dry land; and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land. The Nile was given the veneration of a god in Egypt on account of the fact that the fertility of the entire country depended upon its annual

overflow. If Moses, therefore, had the power to turn this water of blessing into blood, he commanded a power which exceeded that of Pharaoh: death and destruction upon the tyrants was in his hand. The same almighty power of God is able to deliver us from every evil work and to give us the possession of the saints in light.

NET Bible®

And if [*Heb* “and it will be if.”] they do not believe even these two signs or listen to you [*Heb* “listen to your voice.”], then take some water from the Nile and pour it out on the dry ground. The water you take out of the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

The Voice

Eternal One: But if they refuse to believe you and are not persuaded after *you perform* the first two signs, then *here is a third sign:* Take some water from the Nile and pour it out onto the ground. The water you take from the Nile will become blood on the ground.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and (it) will (come to pass), if they will not [support] (both) of these two signs, and they will not hear your voice, (then) you will take from the waters of the stream and you will pour it out to the dry ground, and the waters, which you took from the stream, will exist, and they will exist (as) blood in the dry land,...

Concordant Literal Version

Yet it will come to be even should they not believe these two signs, nor hearken to your voice, then you will take some of the water of the waterway and pour it out on the dry land. And the waters which you are taking from the waterway will come to be, yea will come to be blood on the dry land.

English Standard Version

If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground.”

Green’s Literal Translation
Modern English Version

But if they will not believe also these two signs or listen to your voice, then you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land, and the water which you take out of the river will become blood on the dry land.”

Stuart Wolf
World English Bible

It will happen, if they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, that you shall take of the water of the river, and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take out of the river will become blood on the dry land.”

Young’s Updated LT

“And it has come to pass, if they do not give credence even to these two signs, nor hearken to your voice, that you have taken of the waters of the River, and have poured on the dry land, and the waters which you take from the River have been, yea, they have become—blood on the dry land.”

The gist of this passage:

If they ignore the first two signs, then the third sign will be, you will draw water from the Nile River, pour it onto the dry ground, and it will turn into blood.

Exodus 4:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong’s #1961 BDB #224

Exodus 4:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
Together, ʾîm lô' (לֹא אִם) [pronounced <i>eem low</i>] act as an emphatic affirmative and they mean <i>if not, surely, unless</i> .			
ʾâman (אָמַן) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHN</i>]	<i>to stand firm, to believe, to trust, caused to believe</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #539 BDB #52
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
sh ^e nêy (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh^en-Ā</i>]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of; both of</i>	dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
ʾôwth (אוֹת) [pronounced <i>oath</i>]	<i>sign, a distinguishing mark; token, pledge; remembrance; assurance; a miraculous sign; an omen, a warning</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #226 BDB #16
ʾêlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced <i>ALE-leh</i>]	<i>these, these things; they</i>	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article (often the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	Strong's #428 BDB #41

Translation: And it is, if they do not believe even these two signs...

Then God gives Moses another sign. "Let's say that they do not believe these two signs..."

Exodus 4:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

Exodus 4:9b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâma ^c (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qôwl (קול) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876

Translation: ...and they will not listen to your voice,...

It is not the sign, but the message of Moses which is important. Moses goes to Pharaoh with the authority of God. Therefore, the key in all of this is, are the elders listening to your voice; a does Pharaoh ultimately hear what Moses is telling him?

Exodus 4:9c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לקח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
The NET Bible: <i>The verb form is the perfect tense with the vav (ו) consecutive; it functions then as the equivalent of the imperfect tense – here as an imperfect of instruction.</i> ¹⁶			
min (מן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
mayim (מים) [pronounced MAH-yim]	<i>water, waters</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #4325 BDB #565
y ^e ôr (אֵר) [pronounced y ^e ohr]	<i>river, stream, Nile stream, canal; mining shafts</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2975 BDB #384
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

¹⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

Exodus 4:9c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâphak ^e (שָׁפַק) [pronounced shaw-FAHK ^e]	<i>to pour, to pour out, to shed; to heap up [on a mound]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8210 BDB #1049
yabbâshâh (יַבֵּשׂה) [pronounced yahb- ^b vaw-SHAW]	<i>dry ground, dry land; but not to the point of complete absence of moisture</i>	feminine singular substantive with the definite article	Strong's #3004 BDB #387

Translation: ...then you will take water from the Nile and you will pour [it upon] dry ground,...

If they are not listening to Moses, then he is to take some water from the Nile and pour it onto the dry ground.

Exodus 4:9d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced MAH-yim]	<i>water, waters</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4325 BDB #565
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
y ^e ôr (אֵר) [pronounced y ^e ohr]	<i>river, stream, Nile stream, canal; mining shafts</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2975 BDB #384

Translation: ...and it will be [that] the water which you have taken from the Nile...

It will come to pass, that the water that Moses pours on the ground will change.

Exodus 4:9e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
When the object of this verb is preceded by the lâmed preposition, hâyâh often means <i>to become [something that it was not before]</i> .			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
dâm (דָּם) [pronounced <i>dawm</i>]	<i>blood, often visible blood; bloodshed, slaughter; bloodguilt; blood of the grape [wine]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1818 BDB #196
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yabbâshâh (יַבְשָׁה) [pronounced <i>yahb-^bvaw-SHAW</i>]	<i>dry ground, dry land; but not to the point of complete absence of moisture</i>	feminine singular substantive with the definite article	Strong's #3004 BDB #387

Translation: ...it will become blood on the dry ground.”

This water will become blood.

God is telling Moses that there is a backup plan to the backup plan. Moses is still thinking about the elders of Israel believing him and God is giving Moses the contingency plan when Pharaoh refuses to let the people go. God is a couple steps ahead of Moses. God knows what He is doing and will perform whatever miracles need to be performed in order to accomplish His purposes.

The NET Bible: This is a powerful sign, for the Nile was always known as the source of life in Egypt, but now it will become the evidence of death. So the three signs were alike, each consisting of life and death. They would clearly anticipate the struggle with Egypt through the plagues. The point is clear that in the face of the possibility that people might not believe, the servants of God must offer clear proof of the power of God as they deliver the message of God. The rest is up to God.¹⁷

Exodus 4:9 And it is, if they do not believe even these two signs and they will not listen to your voice, then you will take water from the Nile and you will pour [it upon] dry ground, and it will be [that] the water which you have taken from the Nile, it will become blood on the dry ground.”

There is a third sign here given to Moses and there are two ways to interpret this: (1) this is a sign God gave to Moses which he did not use; (2) this is the first plague (although there are some differences in the actual execution of it).

¹⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

The problem with #2 is, God is not confused by His signs and how they will be done. So He does not describe a sign one way, but then it actually occurs in a much different way (we are not there yet, but trust me, this is not how the first plague takes place). So, the more logical choice is, God gave Moses a third sign. However, I believe that the only sign that Moses will do will be the staff turning into a serpent.

Preview of coming attractions: Moses will insist that Aaron come along with him and be the actual spokesman. The problem with this is, Aaron will not be flexible enough to continue with signs 2 & 3, since #1 will not change the thinking of Pharaoh. Furthermore, Aaron will make a statement before Pharaoh, a statement which is totally wrong and confused. Moses might think that having his older brother there with him will make things go smoother, but Aaron will just screw it up.

Exodus 4:9 *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.*" (NKJV)

What appears to be the case is, Aaron's participation, at first, throws everything off. God gives Moses 3 signs that he can use, but Aaron's false statement and his out-of-rhythm mediatorship between Moses and Pharaoh is out of kilter. What should have been clear is, there was something off when Moses went to speak to Pharaoh, and that was Aaron, who will appear to freestyle his communications with Pharaoh. I mentioned this now, so that you will prepared for it in the future.

End result is, God gives Moses 3 credit cards (that is, *signs*); but because of Aaron's distractive message and approach, Moses only uses one of those 3 credit cards.

The first judgment-sign that God will perform by the hand of Moses will be similar to what we read here.

These signs very likely symbolize some very specific things.

The Three Signs Given to Moses

The Signs	What the Signs Mean
Moses throws his staff onto the ground and it turns into a serpent; he takes it up again, and it turns back to a staff.	The serpent is often used as a biblical metaphor for Satan or demonic powers (e.g., Gen 3:1; Luke 10:19 cp. 9:1 and Mark 16:18; Rev 12:9; 20:2). What Moses faces in the land of Egypt is a plethora of Egyptian gods (that is, demonic powers). Moses will have the ability to neutralize them at any time, despite their appearance (more accurately, God through Moses can neutralize the Egyptian gods).
Moses places his hand into his robe and takes it out, and it is leprous. When he places it back into robe and takes it out, and his hand returns to normal.	Leprosy is often a sign of sin or an indication of sin. The leper is often seen as being completely consumed by sin (I am speaking metaphorically; not literally). When Moses takes his leprous hand and places it back within his robe, and then brings it out, whole again—this is what God is able to do. God is able to take that which is consumed by sin and make it whole again. Along the same lines, if Moses' heart is right, then he is able to accomplish good things with his hand (we are motivated by the heart; and what we do is represented by the hand). If Moses' heart is not right, then his hand is leprous and incapable of doing God's work.
Moses will take water from the Nile River and pour it out on the ground, at which point, it will turn into blood.	Water speaks of blessing and blood speaks of judgment. Egypt, a nation which has enjoyed blessing because Israel resides there. However, because of their actions against Israel and Israel's God, Egypt will now be under judgment from God.

From Nathan Lawrence: *The serpent represents sin, since it is Satan the serpent who introduced sin to man in the Garden of Eden, which brought upon man the curse of death. Yeshua took that curse on himself when he was lifted up on the cross of judgment as Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness (John 3:14). Yeshua defeated Satan the serpent at the cross, even as Moses' serpent defeated the serpents of the satanic Pharaoh's magicians.*

Lawrence continues: *The three signs that YHVH had Moses perform to Pharaoh were merely warning shots against a wicked and unrepentant nation instructing them to submit to Y^ehowah's will. YHVH was telling the Egyptians that if they refused to obey his prophet, he would unleash demonic spirits, plagues of sickness and economic destruction on that nation. These are YHVH's judgments against a nation that refuses to repent. Of course, Egypt refused to obey YHVH, and so he not only brought these judgments against Egypt, but much more, such that Egypt was totally destroyed.*¹⁸

I read several opinions on these signs; the information in the table I believe is the most accurate understanding of the spiritual meaning of these signs.

Had Moses been able to perform these 3 signs—even if Pharaoh did not respond positively to them—they would have stood out as a precursor to the gospel message, and probably would have been presented as such in the New Testament.

Exodus 4:9 *And it is, if they do not believe even these two signs and they will not listen to your voice, then you will take water from the Nile and you will pour [it upon] dry ground, and it will be [that] the water which you have taken from the Nile, it will become blood on the dry ground.*" (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Angels are watching all of this go down. For specific historical events, God apparently gathers the angels en masse to see what God is doing.

Here, they observe God speaking to Moses in the Midian desert; they observe that Moses is not really willing to do what God asks him to do. It is obvious that, despite these amazing signs, Moses will not be completely and totally convinced. Signs and miracles are never enough to change the heart of a recalcitrant man (Moses is not completely recalcitrant; but he is clearly not willing to do exactly what God is asking him to do).

The angels here observe Moses and his reticence to do what God is asking him to do; and they will also observe the eventual deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt, by God through the hand of Moses.

Let me suggest that everything that the angels—both elect and fallen—see, they remember. When God tells them to come and observe some specific set of events, they remember all that happened related to those things. No doubt, nearly all angelic creation was there to observe Moses and his reticence; and they will also witness the signs and plagues which God will bring against Egypt. At this point, the angels are observing the free will of Moses; and later, they will observe the free will of Pharaoh. This will be a set of historical events unlike any other that the angels will observe in man's history.

All that the angels observe reveals man's free will, God's will, man's fallen nature and God's perfect character.

Let's put vv. 6–9 together: *And, Jehovah spoke to him, saying, "Place your hand under your clothing next to your chest—" So Moses brought his hand to his chest, and when brought it out again, it was leprous, white as snow. Then God told him, "Return your hand to your chest—" And Moses again placed his hand next to his chest, under his clothing, and then brought it out again, and the normal flesh color of his hand was restored. God then said, "It will come to pass that, if they do not believe the first sign, then they will believe the second sign. Let's say that they do not believe these two signs and refuse to listen to your voice, then you will take some water from the Nile River and pour it upon dry ground, and this water will become blood on the dry ground."*

¹⁸ From <http://hoshanarabbah.org/blog/2016/01/02/whats-the-significance-of-moses-three-miracles/> accessed November 13, 2018.

This 3rd sign was a sign of judgment; a judgment that would come to Egypt and to Pharaoh, if he rejected God's grace, which is presented to him.

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God Allows Aaron to be His Spokesman Rather than Moses

The big picture here in Exodus 4 is, God has a plan for Moses' life, and Moses is objecting to it. Moses has a great part to play in the history of nation Israel (and in the history of all mankind); but he has to, from his own free will, agree to do what God is asking him to do.

The idea here is, Moses is going to have more than he needs in order to speak before Pharaoh. He will have great authority before God and man. Yet, Moses still manages to come up with another objection:

Several translations subtitle a portion of this chapter, *Aaron to Speak for Moses* (or words to that effect). It seems logical to me that such a division ought to start right here, as this complaint of Moses causes God to bring Aaron into the picture.

Moses has another objection. Moses is a very bright man and can come up with a lot of objections.

Vv. 10–17 is a wonderfully instructive back and forth, give and take, between God and Moses. Moses expresses some negative volition here and sets the limits of what he will actually do. Despite God reasoning with Moses, providing him with clear reasoning, Moses continues to restrict just what it is he will do. Moses does not refuse to go to Pharaoh, but he centers his argument on the idea that, "Listen, God, I am not a public speaker. Surely You know this." Despite God teaching Moses some clear doctrine which Moses certainly knows already and believes, Moses remains intractable in one area—his ability to speak before people. God will both respect Moses' negative volition and He had made provision for it in [eternity past](#).

Interestingly enough, Moses is one of the great public speakers of his time. How do we know this? The book of Deuteronomy is a set of Moses' sermons—some of them quite lengthy and filled with Bible doctrine as well as with the application of Bible doctrine. In fact, Moses' words will be so important as to stand side-by-side God's words from the previous books of Moses.

And so says Moses unto Y^ehowah, "Please, my Adonai, not a man of words I; also from yesterday, also from then, Your speaking unto Your servant, for slow of mouth and slow of tongue I."

Exodus
4:10

Moses then said to Y^ehowah, "Please, my Adonai, I [am] not eloquent [lit., a *man of words*]; both from before and from now [as] You are speaking to Your servant, I [am] slow of speech [lit., *mouth*] and slow of tongue."

Moses then said to Jehovah, "Please, my Lord, I cannot do this alone. I am not eloquent. Prior to this time even up until now as You speak to me, I have been slow of speech."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so says Moses unto Y^ehowah, "Please, my Adonai, not a man of words I; also from yesterday, also from then, Your speaking unto Your servant, for slow of mouth and slow of tongue I."

Dead Sea Scrolls

Targum of Onkelos	And Mosheh said before the Lord, In entreating, I am not a man who is (well) spoken, neither yesterday nor the day before, and from the time that thou spakest with Thy servant: for I am heavy of speech and of a deep [Or, "stammering."] tongue.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Mosheh said before the Lord, O Lord, I pray: I am not a man of words, nor ever have been before that Thou didst speak with Thy servant; for I am of a staggering mouth and staggering speech. [JERUSALEM. For of a staggering mouth and difficult speech am I.]
Revised Douay-Rheims	Moses said: I beseech thee, Lord. I am not eloquent from yesterday and the day before: and since thou hast spoken to thy servant, I have more impediment and slowness of tongue.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mosha said to Mar-Yah, "O Mar-Yah, I am not eloquent, neither before now, nor since you have spoken to your servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Moses said to the LORD. I beseech thee, O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since thou has spoken to thy servant; for I am a stutterer and slow of speech.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Moses said to the Lord, I pray, Lord, I have not been sufficient in former times, neither from the time that you have begun to speak to your servant: I am weak in speech, and slow-tongued.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Moses said to the Lord, O Lord, I am not a man of words; I have never been so, and am not now, even after what you have said to your servant: for talking is hard for me, and I am slow of tongue.
Easy English	But Moses said to the Lord: 'Oh Master, I cannot speak well. I could not speak well before. And I cannot speak well now, since you have spoken to me. I speak slowly and I speak with difficulty.'
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Then Moses said to the LORD, "But, Lord, I am telling you, I am not a good speaker. I have never been able to speak well. And that hasn't changed since you started talking to me. I am still not a good speaker. You know that I speak slowly and don't use the best words."
Good News Bible (TEV)	But Moses said, "No, LORD, don't send me. I have never been a good speaker, and I haven't become one since you began to speak to me. I am a poor speaker, slow and hesitant."
<i>The Message</i>	Moses raised another objection to GOD: "Master, please, I don't talk well. I've never been good with words, neither before nor after you spoke to me. I stutter and stammer."
Names of God Bible	Moses said to Yahweh , "Please, Adonay , I'm not a good speaker. I've never been a good speaker, and I'm not now, even though you've spoken to me. I speak slowly, and I become tongue-tied easily."
NIRV	Moses spoke to the LORD. He said, "Lord, I've never been a good speaker. And I haven't gotten any better since you spoke to me. I don't speak very well at all."
New Simplified Bible	Moses said: »O Jehovah I am not a man of words. I have never been so, and am not now, even after what you have said to your servant. Talking is hard for me, and I am slow of tongue.«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	But Moses said to the Lord, "My Lord, I've never been able to speak well, not yesterday, not the day before, and certainly not now since you've been talking to your servant. I have a slow mouth and a thick tongue."
Contemporary English V.	Moses replied, "I have never been a good speaker. I wasn't one before you spoke to me, and I'm not one now. I am slow at speaking, and I can never think of what to say."
The Living Bible	But Moses pleaded, "O Lord, I'm just not a good speaker. I never have been, and I'm not now, even after you have spoken to me, for I have a speech impediment."
New Berkeley Version New Century Version	. But Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I have never been a skilled speaker. Even now, after talking to you, I cannot speak well. I speak slowly and can't find the best words."
New Life Version	Moses said to the Lord, "Lord, I am not a man of words. I have never been. Even now since You spoke to Your servant, I still am not. For I am slow in talking and it is difficult for me to speak."
New Living Translation	But Moses pleaded with the LORD, "O Lord, I'm not very good with words. I never have been, and I'm not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Moses said to the Lord: 'I beg you Lord; I've not been good at this in the past, and I've not become any better at it since You've started talking to your servant... I'm a poor speaker and I talk slowly!'
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	. Then Moses told the LORD, "Please, LORD, I'm not eloquent [Lit. <i>a man of words</i>]. I never was in the past [Lit. <i>either yesterday or the day before</i>] nor am I now since you spoke to your servant. In fact, I talk too slowly [Lit. <i>heavy of mouth</i>] and I have a speech impediment [Lit. <i>heavy</i>]."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Then Moses said, Lord, have patience with me; but all my life I have been a man of little eloquence, and now that thou, my Master, hast spoken to me, I am more faltering, more tongue-tied than ever.
Translation for Translators	Moses/I replied, "O Yahweh! I am not an eloquent <i>speaker</i> I was not an eloquent speaker before, and I have not become one since you started talking to me! I am not a good speaker [MTY], and I speak very slowly."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Moses was to say to Jehovah: Excuse me please lord, am I a man of speech, three days ago, formerly, or at that time you is to speak to your servant? - For I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue.
Conservapedia	Moses said to the LORD, "My Lord, I'm not eloquent, either before now, or even now that you have spoken to me, and I speak slowly, with a slow tongue." The Hebrew idiomatic phrase is "even from yesterday even from three days." Here Moses makes yet another excuse.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Moses, however, replied to the EVER-LIVING ; " But yet, Lord, I am not an eloquent man, I have not been so in the past, nor in this speaking between You and Your servant, for I am slow of mouth and heavy of tongue."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Moses said unto the Lord: Oh my Lord. I am not eloquent, no not in times past and namely since you have spoken unto your servant: but I am slow mouthed and slow tongued.
NIV, ©2011	Moses said to the Lord, "Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

Tree of Life Version	But Moses said to <i>ADONAI</i> , “ <i>ADONAI</i> , I am not a man of words—not yesterday, nor the day before, nor since You have spoken to Your servant—because I have a slow mouth and a heavy tongue.”
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Moses said to Yahweh. "Of me, Yahweh[Adonai/Lord], I am not a man of words, not yesterday, nor the day before, and neither since you have spoken to your servant. Because leaden of mouth and tongue am I."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Aaron, interpreter of Moses Moses said to Yahweh, “But, my Lord, never have I been a fluent speaker either before or after you have spoken to me. I cannot find words to express what I want to say.”
The Heritage Bible	And Moses said to Jehovah, Oh my Lord, I am not a man of words, both in time past, and now since you have spoken to your servant, because I am of a heavy mouth, and of a heavy tongue.
New American Bible (2011)	<i>Aaron’s Office as Assistant.</i> Moses, however, said to the LORD, “If you please, my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and tongue.” Ex 6:12
Revised English Bible	“But, LORD,” Moses protested, “I have never been a man of ready speech, never in my life, not even now that you have spoken to me; I am slow and hesitant.”

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Moshe said to <i>ADONAI</i> , “Oh, Adonai, I’m a terrible speaker. I always have been, and I’m no better now, even after you’ve spoken to your servant! My words come slowly, my tongue moves slowly.”
exeGesés companion Bible	And Mosheh says to Yah Veh, O my Adonay, I am not a man of words - neither for three yesters ago nor since you have worded to your servant: but I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue.
Hebraic Roots Bible	And Moses said to YAHWEH, O YAHWEH, I am not a man of words, either from yesterday or the third day, nor since You have been speaking to Your bonds slave. For I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue.
Israeli Authorized Version	And Moshe said unto YY , O my YY , I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.
Kaplan Translation	Moses pleaded with God. 'I beg You, O God, I am not a man of words - not yesterday, not the day before - not from the very first time You spoke to me. I find it difficult to speak and find the right language.' first time You spoke to me This indicates either that Moses had heard God's voice before, or that he had spent quite a while near the Burning Bush (Rashi; Seder Olam Rabbah 5). Or, 'even after You spoke to me' (Ramban; Lekach Tov), or, 'because You have spoken to me' and I am so immersed in prophecy (Ralbag). I find it difficult to speak... (Rashbam; Lekach Tov; Chizzkuni; Ralbag). Literally, 'I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue.' Others write that it denotes a speech defect (Rashi; Ibn Ezra; Ralbag; Bachya, quoting Rabbenu Chananel).
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Moshe said unto Hashem, O Adonoi, I am not an ish devarim, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy eved; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow lashon.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Mosheh said to הוהי , “והי , I am not a man of words, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant, for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then Moses said to the Lord, "Please, Lord, I am not a man of words (eloquent, fluent), neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and tongue."
The Expanded Bible	But Moses said to the Lord, "Please, Lord, I have never been a skilled speaker [man of words]. Even now, after talking to you, I cannot speak well. I speak slowly and can't find the best words [have a heavy/slow mouth and a heavy/slow tongue]."
Kretzmann's Commentary	Verses 10-17 The Fears of Moses Reproved And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue. The great fear of Moses now made him protest his oratorical inability. which made it impossible for him to do justice to the message of the Lord and therefore threatened failure to the whole plan. He lacked both the natural gift of facile speech and the practice before an audience, and this ability had not been imparted to him in the course of this conversation.
NET Bible®	Then Moses said to the Lord, ²³ "O ²⁴ my Lord, ²⁵ I am not an eloquent man, ²⁶ neither in the past [<i>Heb</i> "also from yesterday also from three days ago" or "neither since yesterday nor since before that" is idiomatic for "previously" or "in the past."] nor since you have spoken to your servant, for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."
The Voice	Moses: Please, Lord, <i>I am not a talented speaker</i> . I have never been good with words. I wasn't when I was younger and I haven't gotten any better since You revealed Yourself to me. I stutter and stammer. My words get all twisted.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and "Mosheh ^{Plucked outⁿ} said to "YHWH ^{He isⁿ} , excuse me "Adonai ^{My lordsⁿ} , I am not a man of words, <since> <previously> , <since> that time you spoke to your servant, given that I have a heavy mouth and heavy tongue,...
Concordant Literal Version	Then Moses said to Yahweh: O, my Lord! I am no man of words even from yesterday, even from three days ago, even since You spoke to Your servant, for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And Moses said unto Yahweh—Pardon, O My Lord! not a man of words, am I, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant,—for heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue, I am.
English Standard Version	But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue."
Green's Literal Translation	And Moses said to Jehovah, O Lord, I <i>am</i> not a man of words, either from yesterday or the third day, nor since You have been speaking to Your bondsman. For I <i>am</i> heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue.
NASB	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."
New European Version	Moses said to Yahweh, O Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before now, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a stammering tongue.
Stuart Wolf A Voice in the Wilderness	. And Moses said to Jehovah, O my Lord, I am not a man of words, neither formerly in times past nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I have a heavy mouth and a dull tongue.

Young's Updated LT

And Moses says unto Jehovah, "O, my Lord, I am not a man of words, either yesterday, or before, or since Your speaking unto Your servant, for I am slow of mouth, and slow of tongue."

The gist of this passage: Moses will very eloquently explain that he is not very eloquent.

Exodus 4:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
'el (אֵל) [pronounced <i>eh</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
bîy (בִּי) [pronounced <i>bee</i>]	<i>please, I pray, excuse me [please]; this is used to introduce an entreaty or a request</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #994 BDB #106
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The word בִּי (bi) is a particle of entreaty; it seeks permission to speak and is always followed by "my lord" or "my Lord." Often rendered "please," it is "employed in petitions, complaints and excuses" (W. H. C. Propp, Exodus 1–18 [AB], 213).</i>¹⁹</p>			
'ādônîy (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NEE</i>]	<i>my Lord, my Master, my Sovereign; my lord [master]; can be used to refer to a possessor, an owner; transliterated Adoni, adoni</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The designation in Moses' address is אֲדֹנָי ('adonay), a term of respect and deference such as "lord, master, sir" but pointed as it would be when it represents the tetragrammaton. B. Jacob says since this is the first time Moses spoke directly to Yahweh, he did so hesitatingly (Exodus, 87).</i>²⁰</p>			

Translation: Moses then said to Y^ehowah, "Please, my Adonai,..."

¹⁹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

²⁰ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

Moses tries to appeal to God, to reason with God. He does not want to do this thing; and he certainly does not want to walk in alone before Pharaoh and say these things, even with the signs God will give him to show.

In the Hebrew, this is quite funny. Moses are arguing, quite eloquently in fact, before God, using all kinds of figures of speech, drawing from a reasonably extensive vocabulary, and making a fairly cogent argument (except for the fact that it is Moses' very own argument which is God's best argument to refute him).

And, what's more, Moses is making his case to God, not to Pharaoh! Talking before Pharaoh is nothing compared to speaking before God—and yet, Moses has no problem speaking to God and disagreeing with Him.

Isn't this like so many of us! We fear disagreeing with some people, speaking our minds before others; but when it comes to God, then we feel like it is okay to become argumentative. I have a relative who believes in Jesus Christ; but she accepts liberal culture and values and dismisses what she reads in the Bible.

Exodus 4:10b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
d ^o bârîym (דְּבָרִים) [pronounced <i>daw^b-vawr-EEM</i>]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, affairs; reports</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
The NET Bible: <i>When a noun clause is negated with לֹא (lo'), rather than כִּי (en), there is a special emphasis, since the force of the negative falls on a specific word (GKC 479 §152.d). The expression "eloquent man" is אִישׁ דְּבָרִים ('ish dk varim, "a man of words"). The genitive may indicate a man characterized by words or a man who is able to command or control words. Moses apparently is resigned to the fact that he can do the signs, but he knows the signs have to be explained.</i> ²¹			
ʾânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59

Translation: ...I [am] not eloquent [lit., a man of words];...

Now, Moses has been in the desert-wilderness for a great deal of time—for the past 40 years—being married, wandering about with his sheep. However, this has not caused his mind to go soft. As we will see with his argument, Moses is quite the eloquent speaker.

He begins by saying that he is *not a man of words*, which means *I am not eloquent*.

The NET Bible: *Now Moses took up another line of argumentation, the issue of his inability to speak fluently (vv. 10-17). The point here is that God's servants must yield themselves as instruments to God, the Creator. It makes no difference what character traits they have or what weaknesses they*

²¹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

think they have (Moses manages to speak very well) if God is present. If the sovereign God has chosen them, then they have everything that God intended them to have.²²

Exodus 4:10c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
t ^e môwl (לְמוֹת) [pronounced t ^e MOHL]	<i>yesterday; and is used figuratively for recently, formerly</i>	adverb	Strong's #8543 (and #865) BDB #1069
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>both...and, furthermore...as well as, also...also, that...so; either...or (but not used disjunctively)</i>	when gam is repeated	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'âz (אָז) [pronounced awz]	<i>then, after that, at that time, in that case (when following an if or though), now, as things are; that being so, therefore, because of that</i>	adverb	Strong's #227 BDB #23
Min and 'âz together mean <i>from that time, from of old, formerly, long since; from [any] time, from when, since.</i>			
These 6 particles and words are variously translated: <i>either henceforth or since</i> (Owens); .			
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	Piel infinitive construct with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced GE ^B -ved]	<i>slave, servant; underling; subject</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

²² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

Translation: ...both from before and from now [as] You are speaking to Your servant,...

I will use the approach of other translators here, but the idea is, Moses has been a man of “ineloquence” before today and right now, while God is speaking to him. “I’ve been like this for a long time, God. I did not just become inarticulate, but this has been my way for a long time. That’s who I am.”

Perhaps the idiom refers to the two very different periods of his life—recently, he has not been eloquent, as he has spent most of his life as a shepherd; but even back when Moses was being groomed to become Pharaoh, he was not particularly outstanding in the verbal arts.

Exodus 4:10d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
kâbêd (כבד) [pronounced <i>kaw^p-VAYD</i>]	<i>heavy, overweight, abundant, numerous, dull; hard, difficult, burdensome, grievous; severe; very oppressive, numerous, rich</i>	masculine singular adjective; construct form	Strong's #3515 BDB #458
peh (פה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kâbêd (כבד) [pronounced <i>kaw^p-VAYD</i>]	<i>heavy, overweight, abundant, numerous, dull; hard, difficult, burdensome, grievous; severe; very oppressive, numerous, rich</i>	masculine singular adjective; construct form	Strong's #3515 BDB #458
lâshôwn (לשון) [pronounced <i>law-SHOHN</i>]	<i>tongue; speech; language; lapping; tongue-shaped</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3956 BDB #546
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The two expressions are כבד־פה (khk vad peh, “heavy of mouth”), and then כבד־לשון (khk vad lashon, “heavy of tongue”). Both use genitives of specification, the mouth and the tongue being what are heavy – slow. “Mouth” and “tongue” are metonymies of cause. Moses is saying that he has a problem speaking well. Perhaps he had been too long at the other side of the desert, or perhaps he was being a little dishonest. At any rate, he has still not captured the meaning of God’s presence. See among other works, J. H. Tigay, “‘Heavy of Mouth’ and ‘Heavy of Tongue’: On Moses’ Speech Difficulty,” BASOR 231 (1978): 57-67.²³</i></p>			
’ânôkîy (אניכי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59

Translation: ...I [am] slow of speech [lit., *mouth*] and slow of tongue.”

²³ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 13, 2017.

“My mind does not work fast,” is the argument of Moses. “I don’t think on my feet very well; I respond slowly.” Or, “You know that thing, where a few days later you think, ‘That is what I should have said!’ Well, that describes my entire life!”

Moses has articulately said in several ways that he is inarticulate.

Exodus 4:10 Moses then said to Y^ehowah, “Please, my Adonai, I [am] not eloquent [lit., *a man of words*]; both from before and from now [as] You are speaking to Your servant, I [am] slow of speech [lit., *mouth*] and slow of tongue.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

So, how do you pull this off? God comes to you²⁴ and says, “I want you to speak to the President; and here is what you will say...” But you don’t want to. Try saying something like, “Me, words hard—always.” At least, that way, you can better sell your lack of eloquence.

Moses is thinking of excuses why he cannot participate as quickly as he possibly can. It does not occur to him to just trust God and go with God’s program. So Moses thinks about this—even though he can perform a couple of miracles, he still has to speak to the men of Israel and he is not accustomed to public speaking. He may have had some training in this decades ago, but apparently he has never had to put it into practice.

*Thieme/Syndein: Moses: Actually Moses was one of the brightest and best orators of his day. He is just afraid and trying to 'trick God' - like he could!*²⁵

Exodus 4:10 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.” (NKJV)

Moses has had his doubts about this whole thing from the very beginning. He has offered up several objections (all of which seem fairly reasonable from a human standpoint). God has answered each of his objections. Moses has at least some imagination, and what God is asking him to do seems like quite a lot to ask or expect of a normal person. And, quite frankly, Moses does not know the half of it.

Exodus 4:10 Moses then said to Jehovah, “Please, my Lord, I cannot do this alone. I am not eloquent. Prior to this time even up until now as You speak to me, I have been slow of speech.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Finally Moses points out, “Look, I am just not a good talker.” Being *slow of speech and slow of tongue* means that he does not think and speak well on his feet—or, at least, that is his excuse. I don’t know if we are dealing with two different aspects of slowness here or not.

The irony of what Moses is saying is twofold: (1) Moses was trained to be a public speaker; that would have been a part of his training to become Pharaoh. He was trained to be able to do many things; and these abilities will come out as we study more about him. Clearly, he is out of practice; but, obviously, not completely. (2) Right at this moment, Moses is standing up against God and speaking his mind, posing an argument which he hopes will get him out of doing this thing. What could be more difficult to do than that, when it comes to speaking extemporaneously? Somehow, Moses is arguing before the God of the Universe that he might not be able to convey God’s message to Pharaoh, because he would be intimidated by Pharaoh and tongue-tied. Do you see how Moses’ argument is illogical? If Moses can oppose God with these arguments—arguments which he has just thought of right on the spot—then surely he can speak in front of Pharaoh, where God will tell him what to say.

²⁴ So there is no misunderstanding, God is not going to come to any person reading this and tell him to go talk to the President.

²⁵ From http://syndein.com/exodus_04.html accessed February 13, 2017.

And so says Y^ehowah unto him, “Who made a mouth to the man? Or who makes dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not Me, Y^ehowah? And now, go and I will be with your mouth and I have taught you what you will say.”

Exodus
4:11–12

So Y^ehowah said to him, “Who makes a man’s mouth? Who makes [a man] dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not Me, Y^ehowah? Now therefore, go and I will be with your mouth and I will teach you what you will say.”

So Jehovah responded to Moses’s objections, saying, “Who makes a man’s mouth in the first place? Who makes a man dumb, deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not Me, your God? Now, go, knowing that I will be with you and I will guide you as to what you will say.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Y ^e howah unto him, “Who made a mouth to the man? Or who makes dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not Me, Y ^e howah? And now, go and I will be with your mouth and I have taught you what you will say.”
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum of Onkelos	. But the Lord said to him, Who hath appointed the mouth of man, and who hath appointed the mute, or the deaf, or the open-sighted, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? And now go, and My Word shall be with thy mouth, and I will teach thee what to say.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the Lord said, Who is he who first put the language of the mouth into the mouth of man? or who hath appointed the dumb or the deaf, the open-seeing or the blind, but I the Lord? And now go, and I by My Word will be with the speaking of thy mouth, and will teach thee what thou shalt say.
Revised Douay-Rheims	The Lord said to him: Who made man's mouth? or who made the dumb and the deaf, the seeing and the blind? did not I? Go therefore and I will be in thy mouth: and I will teach thee what thou shalt speak.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mar-Yah said to him, "Who made man's mouth? Or who makes one mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, Mar-Yah? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you shall speak."
Peshitta (Syriac)	The LORD said to him, Who has made mans mouth? or who makes the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Is it not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord said to Moses, Who has given a mouth to man, and who has made the very hard of hearing, and the deaf, the seeing and the blind? have not I, God? And now go and I will open your mouth, and will instruct you in what you shall say.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And the Lord said to him, Who has made man's mouth? who takes away a man's voice or hearing, or makes him seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? So go now, and I will be with your mouth, teaching you what to say.
Easy English	Then the Lord said to Moses: 'Who has made human mouths? Who makes a person that cannot speak? Who makes a person that cannot hear? Who makes a person that cannot see? Who makes a person that can see? It is I, the Lord, who does all these things. Now go! I will help you to speak. I will teach you what to say.'
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Then the LORD said to him, “Who made a person’s mouth? And who can make someone deaf or not able to speak? Who can make a person blind? Who can make

a person able to see? I am the one. I am the LORD. So go. I will be with you when you speak. I will give you the words to say.”

The Message

GOD said, “And who do you think made the human mouth? And who makes some mute, some deaf, some sighted, some blind? Isn’t it I, GOD? So, get going. I’ll be right there with you—with your mouth! I’ll be right there to teach you what to say.”

Names of God Bible

Yahweh asked him, “Who gave humans their mouths? Who makes humans unable to talk or hear? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? It is I, **Yahweh**! Now go, and I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible

Then the LORD said to him, “Who gives people the ability to speak? Who’s responsible for making them unable to speak or hard of hearing, sighted or blind? Isn’t it I, the LORD? Now go! I’ll help you speak, and I’ll teach you what you should say.”

Contemporary English V.

But the LORD answered, “Who makes people able to speak or makes them deaf or unable to speak? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Don’t you know that I am the one who does these things? Now go! When you speak, I will be with you and give you the words to say.”

The Living Bible

“Who makes mouths?” Jehovah asked him. “Isn’t it I, the Lord? Who makes a man so that he can speak or not speak, see or not see, hear or not hear? Now go ahead and do as I tell you, for I will help you to speak well, and I will tell you what to say.”

New Berkeley Version
New Living Translation

Then the LORD asked Moses, “Who makes a person’s mouth? Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say.”

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible

And the Lord asked Moses: ‘Who gave man his mouth? Who made both those who can hear and the deaf, and those who can see and the blind? Wasn’t it Me... God? Now, go on, and I will open your mouth and tell you what to say!’

Beck’s American Translation
International Standard V

Then God asked him, “Who gives a person a mouth? Who makes him unable to speak, or deaf, or able to see, or blind, or lame? Is it not I, the LORD? Now, go! I myself will help you with your speech [Lit. *will be with your mouth*], and I’ll teach you what you are to say.”

New Advent (Knox) Bible

Why, the Lord said to him, who was it that fashioned man’s mouth? Who is it that makes a man dumb or deaf, clear-sighted or blind, if not I? Go as thou art bidden; I will speak with thy mouth, telling thee what words to utter.

Translation for Translators

Then Yahweh said to him/me, “ *You seem to forget* who it is that makes people able to speak [RHQ]! Who is it that enables people to be unable to speak or unable to hear, or able to see or not to see? It is I, Yahweh [RHQ]! So start going *to Egypt*, and I will help you to speak [MTY], and I will tell you what you should say.”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible

Jehovah was to say: I am he, who has set the human's mouth, even who was to set the dumb, deaf, seeing, and blind; I am Jehovah. Be proceeding, I am to have given you a mouth, to be pointing out that you was to declare.

Conservapedia

The LORD said to him, "Who made men's mouths? Who makes the dumb, the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Was it not I, the LORD? Now go, and I'll be with you, and guide your mouth, and teach you what you to say." Never plead a lack of

	qualification from you you'r made, not when you're talking to God--for God ought to know exactly what you're capable of, because He made you.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But the EVER-LIVING replied to him, " Who gave a mouth to man? or who makes dumb, or deaf ? or blind, or seeing ? Is it not I, the LIVING ONE ? So now go, and I will be with your mouth and show you what you shall say."
HCSB	Yahweh said to him, "Who made the human mouth? Who makes him mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? Now go! I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say."
NIV, ©2011	The LORD said to him, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Yahweh said to him, "Who put the mouth to man? Or who makes the dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Why it is me, Yahweh! And now, go. And I will be at your mouth, and I will instruct you what you will say."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Yahweh said to him, "Who gave man a mouth? Who makes him dumb or deaf, with sight or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? Go now. I will be on your lips and will inspire what you say."
The Heritage Bible	And Jehovah said to him, Who put a mouth on Adam? Or who put the speechless, or deaf, or clear sighted, or the blind? Is it not I, Jehovah? And now walk, and I will be with your mouth, and cause what you shall speak to flow to you.
New American Bible (2002)	The LORD said to him, "Who gives one man speech and makes another deaf and dumb? Or who gives sight to one and makes another blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Go, then! It is I who will assist you in speaking and will teach you what you are to say."
New American Bible (2011)	The LORD said to him: Who gives one person speech? Who makes another mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go, I will assist you in speaking* and teach you what you are to say. Assist you in speaking: lit., "be with your mouth"; cf. v. 15, lit., "be with your mouth and with his mouth."
New RSV	Then the LORD said to him, 'Who gives speech to mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to speak.'
Revised English Bible	The LORD said to him, "Who is it that gives man speech? Who makes him dumb or deaf? Who makes him keen-sighted or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Go now; I shall help you to speak and show you what to say."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	ADONAI answered him, "Who gives a person a mouth? Who makes a person dumb or deaf, keen-sighted or blind? Isn't it I, ADONAI? Now, therefore, go; and I will be with your mouth and will teach you what to say."
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yah Veh says to him, Who set the human mouth? Or who set the mute, or deaf, or the open-eyed, or the blind? Have not I -Yah Veh? Now go and I - I am with your mouth and direct you what to word.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	And the Lord said to him, "Who gives man speech? Who makes him dumb or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go, and I will be with you as you speak and will instruct you what to say."

Kaplan Translation	'Who gave man a mouth?' replied God. 'Who makes a person dumb or deaf? Who gives a person sight or makes him blind? Is it not I - God? Now go! I will be with your mouth and teach you what to say.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Hashem said unto him, Who hath made man's peh (mouth)? Or who maketh dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, Hashem? Now therefore go, and Eh-heh-yeh (I will be) with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Then the Lord said to him, "Who made a person's mouth? And who makes someone deaf or ·not able to speak [mute]? Or who gives a person sight or blindness? It is I, the Lord. Now go! I will ·help you speak [^{be with your mouth}], and I will teach you what to say."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? The excuse of Moses might have weight with men, but not with the Lord, who has absolute power over all the senses, being able to give the full use of them or to withdraw this in whole or in part. Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. It was an easy matter for the Lord to impart divine eloquence to Moses, both as to facility of speech and as to choice of the most fitting words. All reasonable objections of Moses were now removed.
NET Bible®	The Lord said to him, "Who gave a mouth to man, or who makes a person mute or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? So now go, and I will be with your mouth and will teach you what you must say."
The Voice	Eternal One: Who is it that gives a person a mouth? Who determines whether one person speaks and another doesn't? Why is it that one person hears and another doesn't? And why can one person see and another doesn't? Isn't it <i>because of Me</i> , the Eternal? <i>You know it is.</i> Go now, and I will be there to give you the words to speak; I will tell you what to say.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and "YHWH ^{He Is} " said to him, who placed the mouth (of) the human? or who placed the mute or the silent or the seeing or the blind? is it not I, "YHWH ^{He Is} "? and now walk, and I will exist with your mouth, and I will [teach] you (what) you will speak,...
Concordant Literal Version	Yahweh said to him: Who make the mouth for a human or Who is making one mute or deaf or with eye unclosed or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? And now go, and I shall come to be with your mouth and direct you what you shall speak.
Darby Translation	And Jehovah said to him, Who gave man a mouth? or who maketh dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? [have] not I, Jehovah? And now go, and I will be with thy mouth, and will teach thee what thou shalt say.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	Then Yahweh said unto him—Who appointed a mouth for man, or who appointeth him to be dumb, or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh,? Now, therefore go,—and, I, will be with thy mouth, so will I direct thee, what thou shalt speak.
Green's Literal Translation NASB	. 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? Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say."
Stuart Wolf Young's Updated LT	. And Jehovah says unto him, "Who appointed a mouth for man? Or who appoints the dumb, or deaf, or open, or blind? Is it not I, Jehovah? And now, go, and I—I am with your mouth, and have directed you that which you speak."

The gist of this passage: God asks Moses, “Who gave you your mouth? Who makes a person deaf, dumb or blind? Is it not I, Y^ehowah?” Then God tells Moses to go and He would tell him what to say.

In vv. 11–12, God will reason with Moses. He will state obvious truths, which Moses ought to understand and agree with. Then God reassures Moses. After all this, God will respect Moses’ volition (Moses will express his volition in v. 13; God will respect it in vv. 14–16).

Exodus 4:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
’amar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong’s #3068 BDB #217
’el (אל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #413 BDB #39

Translation: So Y^ehowah said to him,...

God actually indulges Moses, but bear in mind, God knew that this conversation would become Scripture; so this is for our edification as well. We also learn from this.

Exodus 4:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
mîy (מי) [pronounced <i>mee</i>]	<i>who, whom; whose, whomever; what; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong’s #4310 BDB #566
sîym (שים) [pronounced <i>seem</i>]; also spelled sûwm (שום) [pronounced <i>soom</i>]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong’s #7760 BDB #962

Exodus 4:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âdâm (אָדָם) [pronounced aw-DAWM]	<i>a man, a human being, mankind; transliterated Adam</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #120 & #121 BDB #9

The word *the Adam* can mean *man, mankind, humankind, men, human beings*.

Translation: ...“Who makes a man’s mouth?”

Moses complains about his mouth being slow (despite the fact that he seemed to have a ready response to God). God asks Moses, “Who made your mouth?” This is not a difficult question to answer. But God does not stop there.

Exodus 4:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ôw (אוּ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
mîy (מִי) [pronounced mee]	<i>who, whom; whose, whomever; what; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
sîym (שִׂים) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sûwm (שׂוּם) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
The NET Bible: <i>The verb שִׂים (sim) means “to place, put, set”; the sentence here more precisely says, “Who put a mouth into a man?”</i> ²⁶			
'illêm (אֵלֵם) [pronounced ihl-LAME]	<i>dumb, unable to speak, mute, silent, speechless</i>	adjective	Strong's #483 BDB #48
'ôw (אוּ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14

²⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

Exodus 4:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chêrêsh (שָׁרֵשׁ) [pronounced khay- RAYSH]	deaf (literal or spiritual)	adjective	Strong's #2795 BDB #361

This is the first occurrence of these two words (*deaf* and *dumb*) in Scripture.

Translation: Who makes [a man] dumb or deaf...

"Who makes a man deaf or dumb?" God asks. Moses complains that he is not fast-on-his-feet; and, in essence, he is blaming God when he says this. "Listen, Moses," is the sub-text here, "Do you realize that I could have made you dumb or deaf?" How are men deaf and dumb? God either makes them that way from birth or God allows circumstances to change them during life. "Listen, Moses, you say you are slow of speech; you know that I could have made you *dumb*, right? So that you could not speak at all? You know that I could have made you deaf, so that you could not even hear what I am saying to you, right?"

Exodus 4:11d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ôw (וְ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
piqqêach (פִּקְּחֵאךְ) [pronounced pihk-KAY- ahkh]	<i>seeing, clear-sighted; informally, intelligent, wise</i>	adjective	Strong's #6493 BDB #824
'ôw (וְ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and; if, perchance; except, or else; whether, not the least</i>	disjunctive conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
'ivvêr (עִוְוֵר) [pronounced gihv-VAIR]	<i>blind [literally or figuratively], blind [men, people]; blindness</i>	adjective [used here as a substantive]	Strong's #5787 BDB #734.

Translation: ...or seeing or blind?

Then God uses two descriptive antonyms. "I make men seeing or blind," is what God has said, but that is not all that God means here. Colloquially, the word for *seeing* also means, *clear-sighted, intelligent, wise*. "How did I make you, Moses? Are you intelligent or are you blind?" The obviously answer is, God made Moses intelligent.

The NET Bible: *The argumentation by Moses is here met by Yahweh's rhetorical questions. They are intended to be sharp – it is reproof for Moses. The message is twofold. First, Yahweh is fully able to overcome all of Moses' deficiencies. Second, Moses is exactly the way that God intended him to be. So the rhetorical questions are meant to prod Moses' faith.*²⁷

²⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

Exodus 4:11e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]		interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> .	Strong's #none BDB #209
lô' (לֹא or לוֹל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
Hă lô' together expect an affirmative answer and can be translated <i>is it not?</i> Let me suggest, this might be understood to mean, <i>is it not true that?</i> Or, <i>isn't this the case that?</i> Or, <i>is it not obvious that?</i> These two words together present a question with an obvious, self-evident answer. This combination is found in Gen. 4:11 20:5 Job 1:10 Num. 23:26 1Kings 1:11.			
'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me;</i> (sometimes a verb is implied)	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

The NET Bible: *The final question obviously demands a positive answer. But the clause is worded in such a way as to return to the theme of "I AM." Isaiah 45:5-7 developed this same idea of God's control over life. Moses protests that he is not an eloquent speaker, and the Lord replies with reminders about himself and promises, "I will be with your mouth," an assertion that repeats the verb he used four times in 3:12 and 14 and in promises to Isaac and Jacob (Gen 26:3; 31:3).*²⁸

Translation: Is it not Me, Y^ehowah? The first two particles mean *is it not*. God is telling Moses, "When it comes to your assets and defects, who do you think planned that out? Who do you think made you that way?"

Moses' objection is not an excuse to God. God has chosen Moses. It is God who has decided who can speak and who cannot. This is not Moses' prerogative to second guess what God has provided for him.

Exodus 4:11 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? (NKJV)

God reasons with Moses. "You say you are slow of speech and slow of tongue; just who do you think made your mouth?" Obviously, God made his mouth—and his brain as well. God is saying, "I AM God! I have equipped you for this job. I know what you are capable of doing. You do not have a valid excuse."

Whatever a person has or lacks (or thinks he lacks), God made that. If God has a thing for you to do, then you are able to do that thing—He knows the full extent of your potential because He made you and He can read your heart. God will not require us to do something that we are unable to do.

Furthermore, God is omniscient; He knows the end from the beginning; therefore, He knows what Moses is capable of doing; but that is not the argument that God uses.

²⁸ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

God is not going to require from Moses what Moses is unable to do.

God gives Moses his marching orders, but they will be subject to Moses agreeing to do what God is asking him to do.

Exodus 4:11 So Y^ehowah said to him, “Who makes a man’s mouth? Who makes [a man] dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not Me, Y^ehowah? (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:12a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
‘attâh (אתָּ) [pronounced <i>gah-TAWH</i>]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong’s #6258 BDB #773
When followed by an imperative or an interrogative, w ^e + the adverb ‘attâh mean <i>and so, thus, things being so, therefore, now therefore, now then, in conclusion</i> . Sometimes, the concept of time is lost when this combination is used to incite another.			
bôw’ (בוּ) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>come [in], go [in], enter, advance</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong’s #935 BDB #97

Translation: [Now therefore, go...](#)

God has given Moses marching orders, and He tells Moses, “It is time to go. Time to do what I have told you to do.”

Exodus 4:12b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
’ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong’s #595 BDB #59
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #1961 BDB #224
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong’s #5973 BDB #767
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #6310 BDB #804

Exodus 4:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The NET Bible: <i>The promise of divine presence always indicates intervention (for blessing or cursing). Here it means that God would be working through the organs of speech to help Moses speak. See Deut 18:18; Jer 1:9.</i> ²⁹			

Translation: ...and I will be with your mouth...

God adds, "And if you are at all confused, I will be with your mouth" which means, God will be with his thinking, which is expressed with his mouth.

One of the very interesting facets of our relationship with the True God is, we do not lose control of our faculties or of our minds when God uses us. We do not turn into *Christian bots*. Our humanity and our personal being is never set aside nor does it ever become inoperable, even in the greatest spiritual service. Our submission to God will both a result of a wilful choice and moment-by-moment volition.

Moses is one of the greatest public speakers in human history; and he is one of the greatest leaders in human history (he might be the greatest). However, he does not lose control of his own thinking or volition or the function of his body in all of this. He is never in a spiritual trance. Although Moses is one of the greatest examples of submission to God (not here, but later in his life), this does not mean that his person and consciousness are somehow lost. Of course, we are vessels for the Lord Jesus Christ; but this does not mean that, at the height of our submission to God, that our thinking and volition both cease to exist for that submissive period of time. We are not going to do some great spiritual service (proclaim a sermon, relay the gospel of Jesus Christ), and then, suddenly snap out of it, wondering, *where was I?* Obviously, submission to God is quite important in the spiritual life; however, that does not result in a loss of human cognition.

Some of you may be familiar with the term *Christian mysticism*; so let me say it plainly: *Christian mysticism* is not the Christian way of life; it is not the spiritual life. It is wholly unrelated to Christianity.

Exodus 4:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yârâ' (אָרַי) [pronounced yaw-RAW]	<i>to throw, cast; to shoot; to point out, show; to direct, teach, instruct; to throw water, rain</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil perfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3384 BDB #432

The NET Bible: *The verb is אָרַי (אָרַי), the Hiphil perfect with a vav (ו) consecutive. The form carries the instructional meaning because it follows the imperative "go." In fact, there is a sequence at work here: "go...and/that I may teach you." It is from אָרַי (yara), the same root behind תּוֹרָה (torah, "law"). This always referred to teaching either wisdom or revelation. Here Yahweh promises to teach Moses what to say.*³⁰

²⁹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

³⁰ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

Exodus 4:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180

The NET Bible: *The form is the imperfect tense. While it could be taken as a future (“what you will say”), an obligatory imperfect captures the significance better (“what you must say” or “what you are to say”). Not even the content of the message will be left up to Moses.*³¹

Translation: ...and I will teach you what you will say.”

God will make sure that Moses knows what to say. This should have been all the assurance that Moses needed. But it was not enough.

Notice how this is phrased. Moses is not told to, “Just open your mouth and I will speak the words for you.” No, not at all. “I will instruct you in what you will say.” Moses will *learn* what God has for him to do.

Yahweh has made it quite clear that Moses has a mouth (by divine design) and that God will tell him what to say. What more does he need? Jesus Christ told His disciples the same thing fifteen hundred years later. **Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore, be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak. For it is not you who is speaking but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.** (Matt 10:16-20; also see Mark 13:11 Luke 21:12-17).

Some have taken this verse or the passage just quoted from Matthew out of context. You cannot claim either of these passages in lieu of learning God's Word. When the time comes, we cannot simply open our mouths and God will just speak for us. God chose the disciples who were, for the most part, spiritually weak. Jesus Christ told them time and time again about the cross and they later remembered that when writing Scripture, but did not seem to know about it when the time came.

Jesus knew when He spoke these words to them that they were for all intents and purposes, without resources. Under circumstances of pressure; the eleven disciples would fall apart. He therefore promised them that they would be able to communicate His Word as they should be able to even under pressure. Most, if not all of the disciples, would develop the doctrinal resources in their **souls** and be able to speak God's Word under tremendous pressure through the power of the Holy Spirit to the courts and rulers that they will be brought before.

Today, we have the entire Word of God and the ability to grasp its meaning and intention. We claim such a promise in cognizance, not in ignorance. God can and does prepare us to a point where we are not robots but our souls take an active part in what we say and think. This is certainly not a full exposition of these three

³¹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

passages, which actually were spoken on two occasions, the first time spoken to all the disciples as a near prophecy, and the second time as a near and far prophecy said to only certain Apostles.

In this context, Moses was still coming up with excuses and God was answering those excuses. God has a plan for our lives and we should fall into this plan willingly. It is not some obscure maze that we have to continually pray about and ask for miracles to direct us. In Moses' case, God spoke to him directly because (1) there was a dearth of Scripture and, (2) because God had an extremely important and individual job for Moses to do. Once we learn some doctrine, what God wants us to do is often too clear; and we, due to negative volition and not due to ignorance, will choose against His plan.

Exodus 4:12 **Now therefore, go and I will be with your mouth and I will teach you what you will say.**" (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:12 **Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.**" (NKJV)

Exodus 4:11–12 **So Y^ehowah said to him, "Who makes a man's mouth? Who makes [a man] dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not Me, Y^ehowah? Now therefore, go and I will be with your mouth and I will teach you what you will say."** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

"Don't worry about what you lack or what you have by way of verbal prowess; I will be with your mouth and help you to say the right thing," is the assurance that God gives Moses. However, Moses continues to object.

Exodus 4:11–12 **So Jehovah responded to Moses's objections, saying, "Who makes a man's mouth in the first place? Who makes a man dumb, deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not Me, your God? Now, go, knowing that I will be with you and I will guide you as to what you will say."** (Kukis paraphrase)

It is fascinating to me that, 99.99% of the time, God uses a human messenger to convey His Word. The angel Gabriel will speak to Mary and to the parents of John the baptizer; but he is that very rare exception. God does not send an angel to speak to Pharaoh; He sends Moses—a somewhat reluctant Moses.

Application: We are the ones by which God does His work on earth. Believe it or not, God has some people in your periphery who need to hear His Word. Now, this does not mean that you are going to quote Scriptures to every one you see every single day; but Bible doctrine gives you the discernment and the wisdom regarding what to say and when to say it. The people around you are your mission field. This does not mean that you will set up a soapbox on your street and start speaking in a loud voice about Sodom and Gomorrah (despite there being so many parallels to today's world).

Application: And to orient you to this **dispensation**, bear in mind that God is *never* going to speak to you personally, from a burning bush or from some other phenomenon, nor will He take you aside and tell you what to do, step-by-step. God is able to speak to you through His Word and guide you by His Word (the Bible), as revealed while you are in the Spirit (that is, in fellowship—1John 1:9). Without God's Word, you are not guided in this life. We are all given the Holy Spirit, but unless we have doctrine in our souls, there is no guidance.

Application: Bible doctrine guides you as to what to say and when to say it.

Let me draw an analogy. Perhaps you have heard of **wild children**; children who have not been raised by humans, but by animals (yes, such people have existed—they are also called **feral children**). What we have found is, a child who is raised by animals, once he reaches his teens, is permanently stunted in his intellect. Some develop a small vocabulary of perhaps 20 words, but they never become normal human beings. They are not capable of doing normal human things if they go for too long without human interaction as children.

Here is the parallel: this is your spiritual life. Unless you learn the things of God, you will never have a normal spiritual life. Now, you can pretend to have a spiritual life. You can go to church, sing hymns, pray and give money—and even act as a deacon or a pastor—but if you are without Bible doctrine in your human spirit, then you

spiritual life is stunted . Just as a wild child cannot adjust to human interaction, past a certain age; the same is true of us who never develop any spiritual maturation. Without Bible doctrine, our spiritual lives are an act, an imitation at best, and no more than skin deep.

You can dress and groom a wild child; and, as long as there is no intricate human interaction, they look and seem normal. But, that is only skin deep. You move closer, and you find out that the wild child is incapable of normal human interaction. So it is with the believer who lacks spiritual information in his soul. His spiritual life is, at best, just an act.

Back to Moses, who wants God to choose someone for this job other than him:

And so he says, “Please, my Adonai, send now in a hand you will send.”	Exodus 4:13	But he said, “Please, my Adonai, send [someone else], I pray You. [Please accomplish Your work] by the hand [of another man who] you will send.”
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But he said, “Please, my Lord, send someone else instead of me!”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he says, “Please, my Adonai, send now in a hand you will send.”
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum of Onkelos	And he said, I beseech the Lord to send by the hand of one who is fit to be sent.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he said, I pray for mercy before the Lord. Send now Thy sending by the hand of Phinehas, by whom it is to be sent at the end of the days. [JERUSALEM. Send now by the hand of him by whom it is opportune to send.]
Revised Douay-Rheims	But he said: I beseech thee, Lord send whom thou wilt send.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	He said, "Oh, Lord, please send someone else."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Moses said to him, O my LORD, send I beseech thee, by the hand of whomsoever thou wilt send.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Moses said, I pray you, Lord, appoint another able <i>person</i> whom you shall send.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And he said, O Lord, send, if you will, by the hand of anyone whom it seems good to you to send.
Easy English	But Moses said, ‘Oh Master, please send some other person.’
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	But Moses said, “My Lord, I beg you to send someone else, not me.”
Good News Bible (TEV)	But Moses answered, “No, Lord, please send someone else.”
<i>The Message</i>	He said, “Oh, Master, please! Send somebody else!”
Names of God Bible	But Moses said, “Please, Adonay , send someone else.”
NIRV	But Moses said, “Lord, please send someone else to do it.”
New Simplified Bible	But Moses said: »Please, Jehovah, send the message by whomever you will.«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	But Moses said, "Please, my Lord, just send someone else."
Contemporary English V.	Moses begged, "LORD, please send someone else to do it."
The Living Bible	.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	But Moses said, "O Lord, I ask of You, send some other person."
New Living Translation	But Moses again pleaded, "Lord, please! Send anyone else."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	But Moses continued: 'I beg you Lord, send someone who is more capable!'
Beck's American Translation	.
International Standard V	Moses said, "Please, LORD, send somebody else [Lit. <i>by a hand send</i> ; i.e. <i>by someone else's hand send</i>]."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	But still he said, Lord have patience with me; wilt thou not choose some fitting emissary? The phrase here used, 'Send the man whom as a matter of fact thou art going to send' must be interpreted, in view of what follows, as a remonstrance, not as an act of submission.
Translation for Translators	But he/I replied, "O, Yahweh, I ask you, please send someone else <i>instead!</i> "

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	He was to say: Excuse me please lord, was you to send, a sending by my hand?
Conservapedia	And he said, "My Lord, please send Your message by someone else." Moses moves from mere excuse-making to an attempt at resignation.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But he answered ; " Indeed, my Lord, send I pray You by some other hand ! "
God's Truth (Tyndale)	But he said: Oh my Lord, send I pray you whom you will.
Lexham English Bible	And he said, "Please, Lord, do send {anyone else whom you wish to send} [Literally "by the hand of [someone] you will send"]."
NIV, ©2011	But Moses said, "Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else."
Tree of Life Version	But he said, "Please, please, send it by another hand."
Urim-Thummim Version	And he replied, O my Adonai please send another one to do this.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And he said "As for me, Yahweh[Adonai/Lord] please send me by the hand of the sent."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	But Moses insisted, "My Lord, I pray you, why not send someone else?"
New American Bible (2002)	Yet he insisted, "If you please, Lord, send someone else!" Send someone else: literally, "Send by means of him whom you will send," that is, "Send whom you will."
New Jerusalem Bible	'Please, my Lord,' Moses replied, 'send anyone you decide to send!'
Revised English Bible	Moses said, "Lord, send anyone else you like."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	But he replied, "Please, Lord, send someone else — anyone you want!"
exeGesés companion Bible	And he says, O my Adonay, send, I beseech you, by the hand of him whom you send.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	But he said, "Please, O Lord, make someone else Your agent."
Kaplan Translation	'I beg you O Lord!' exclaimed [Moses]. 'Please! Send someone more appropriate!' (Targum; Sforno). Literally, 'send by the one You will send.' Or, 'Send whomever else You wish' (Rashi; Rashbam); or, 'Send [Aaron], the one You usually send' (Rashi).
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And he said, O Adonoi, send, now, by the yad of him whom Thou wilt send.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible But he said, "Please my Lord, send the message [of rescue to Israel] by [someone else,] whomever else You will [choose]."

The Expanded Bible But Moses said, "Please, Lord, send someone else [you want to send]."

Kretzmann's Commentary And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send. The misgivings of Moses were still so great that he wanted the mission to be taken care of by anyone else than himself. The weakness of his flesh was so overpowering that his words sound like a flat refusal.

NET Bible® But Moses said [*Heb* "And he said"; the referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.], "O my Lord, please send anyone else whom you wish to send!"

The Voice **Moses:** Please, Lord, I beg you to send Your message through someone else, anyone else.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. *Emphasized Bible* ...and he said, excuse me "Adonai ^{My lords}", please send (by) the hand, can send, ... And he said—Pardon, O My Lord! send, I pray thee by the hand of him whom thou wilt send—

English Standard Version But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else."

Green's Literal Translation And he said, O Lord, please send by the hand of *him whom* You will send.

Modern English Version He said, "O my Lord, send, I pray, by the hand of whomever else You will send."

Modern Literal Version And he said, Oh, Lord, I beseech you, send by the hand of him whom you will send.

NASB But he said, "Please, Lord, now send *the message* by whomever You will."

Stuart Wolf .

Young's Updated LT And he says, "O, my Lord, send, I pray you, by the hand You will send."

The gist of this passage: Moses asks for God to send someone else other than him.

Exodus 4:13			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
bîy (בִּי) [pronounced bee]	please, I pray, excuse me [please]; this is used to introduce an entreaty or a request	particle of entreaty	Strong's #994 BDB #106
The NET Bible: The word בִּי (bi) is a particle of entreaty; it seeks permission to speak and is always followed by "Lord" or "my Lord." ³²			

³² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

Exodus 4:13

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾādônîy (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced <i>uh-doh-NEE</i>]	<i>my Lord, my Master, my Sovereign; my lord [master]; can be used to refer to a possessor, an owner; transliterated Adoni, adoni</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #113 & #136 BDB #10
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>]	<i>send, send for [forth, away], dismiss, deploy, put forth, stretch out, reach out</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced <i>naw</i>]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
Nâ' is used for a submissive and modest request. It is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2 nd person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Gen. 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Gen. 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Gen. 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word <i>let</i> .			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
This combination of the bêyth preposition and <i>hand</i> literally means <i>in a hand of, in [the] hand of</i> ; and can be rendered <i>into the hand [s] of; by the hand of; in [under] the power [control] of, in the possession of; by the power of; with; through, by, by means of; before, in the sight of</i> .			
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; what is sent (<i>messengers, a message</i>) is implied; pausal form	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018

The NET Bible: *The text has simply שְׁלַחְךָ אֶגְדֵי בְיַד אֲנִי (shlakh-na' b'k yad tishlach, "send by the hand you will send"). This is not Moses' resignation to doing God's will – it is his final attempt to avoid the call. It carries the force of asking God to send someone else. This is an example of an independent relative clause governed by the genitive: "by the hand of – whomever you will send" (see GKC 488-89 §155.n).³³*

Translation: But he said, "Please, my Adonai, send [someone else], I pray You. [Please accomplish Your work] by the hand [of another man who] you will send."

The latter half of this verse is rather difficult to determine. Based upon the context, it appears that Moses is saying, "Send someone else." Is it possible that some words have been left out of the accepted text?

³³ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

By the hand of, suggests a message. Messengers were sent all of the time in the ancient world; and it would make sense to have a message—particularly an important message—to be written down, so that its meaning is not lost or distorted. So Moses is called upon to *carry a message* to his people and to Pharaoh, and he asks that this message be carried by someone else.

Moses is saying, "Please, if You would, send someone else." The hand is the agency by which something is done. Whereas this verse literally reads: "And he [Moses] said, O Lord, send I pray you by the hand You will send." In other words, *accomplish Your work through any agency except me*. God has all the patience in the world; a thousand years is as a day to Him.

God does not have anger as an emotion. The next verse is put in terms of language of accommodation. It is put on a level which we can understand. At this point in time, even we should start becoming impatient with Moses.

Exodus 4:13 But he [Moses] said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send." (NKJV)

Exodus 4:13 But he said, "Please, my Adonai, send [someone else], I pray You. [Please accomplish Your work] by the hand [of another man who] you will send." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

God's assurances are not enough for Moses. "Look, you must have a #2 guy in mind; why not talk to him and send him out instead of me?" seems to be Moses' attitude. After all, there are 2 million Hebrews; and half of them are males. Surely, there is a better choice from within that massive group, Moses argues, thinking fast and speaking his mind—indicating that he is clearly the right man for this job.

Exodus 4:13 But he said, "Please, my Lord, send someone else instead of me!" (Kukis paraphrase)

We may entitle this, *God respects Moses' volition*. This is important, as it sets us up for the all-important question, did God violate Pharaoh's volition, one of the great controversies of the book of Exodus.

And so is kindled a nostril of Y^ehowah against Moses, and so He says, "Is [there] not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I have known that speaking he speaks [even] he. And behold him coming out to meet you, and he has seen you and he was happy in his heart.

Exodus
4:14

The anger of Y^ehowah is kindled against Moses, and He said, "Is [there] not your brother Aaron, the Levite? I know that he [even] he talks a lot. And, look, he is coming out to meet you, and [when] he sees you, he will be happy in his heart.

The anger of Jehovah burned against Moses, and He said, "Don't you have a brother, Aaron, the Levite? I am aware that he is quite the talker. And what do you know, he is coming out to meet you—right now. When he sees you, he will be overjoyed.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so is kindled a nostril of Y^ehowah against Moses, and so He says, "Is [there] not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I have known that speaking he speaks [even] he. And behold him coming out to meet you, and he has seen you and he was happy in his heart.

Dead Sea Scrolls
Targum of Onkelos

.
And the displeasure of the Lord was kindled against Mosheh; and He said, Is not Aharon the Levite, thy brother, known before Me as one who speaking can speak?

and also, behold, he cometh forth to anticipate thee, and will see thee, and rejoice in his heart.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Mosheh, and He said, Is it not manifest before Me that Aharon thy brother speaking can speak ? And, behold, also, he cometh forth to meet thee, and will see thee and rejoice in his heart.
Revised Douay-Rheims	The Lord being angry at Moses, said Aaron the Levite is thy brother, I know that he is eloquent: behold he cometh forth to meet thee, and seeing thee shall be glad at heart.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	The anger of Mar-Yah was kindled against Mosha, and he said, "What about Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Also, behold, he comes forth to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the anger of the LORD kindled against Moses, and he said to him, Behold, Aaron, your brother, the Levite. I know that he is a good speaker, and also, behold, he will come forth to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord was greatly angered against Moses, and said, Lo! is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he will surely speak to you; and, behold, he will come forth to meet you, and beholding you he will rejoice within himself.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And the Lord was angry with Moses, and said, Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? To my knowledge he is good at talking. And now he is coming out to you: and when he sees you he will be glad in his heart.
Easy English	.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Then the LORD became angry with Moses and said, "All right! I'll give you someone to help you. Aaron the Levite is your brother, isn't he? He is a good speaker. In fact, Aaron is already coming to meet you, and he will be happy to see you.
<i>The Message</i>	GOD got angry with Moses: "Don't you have a brother, Aaron the Levite? He's good with words, I know he is. He speaks very well. In fact, at this very moment he's on his way to meet you. When he sees you he's going to be glad.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Then the LORD got angry at Moses and said, "What about your brother Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak very well. He's on his way out to meet you now, and he's looking forward to seeing you.
Contemporary English V.	The LORD became irritated with Moses and said: What about your brother Aaron, the Levite? I know he is a good speaker. He is already on his way here to visit you, and he will be happy to see you again.
The Living Bible	Then the Lord became angry. "All right," he said, "your brother, Aaron, is a good speaker. And he is coming here to look for you and will be very happy when he finds you.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Century Version	The LORD became angry with Moses and said, "Your brother Aaron, from the family of Levi, is a skilled speaker. He is already coming to meet you, and he will be happy when he sees you.
New Living Translation	Then the LORD became angry with Moses. "All right," he said. "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he speaks well. And look! He is on his way to meet you now. He will be delighted to see you.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, this made the Lord very angry with Moses, so He said: 'Look; isn't Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he'll speak for you... look, he's coming to meet you, and when he sees you, he'll be jumping for joy.
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	Then the LORD was angry with Moses and said, "There is your brother Aaron, a descendant of Levi, isn't there? I know that he certainly is eloquent [Lit. <i>he certainly speaks</i>]. Right now he's coming to meet you and he will be pleased to see you.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And now the Lord was angry with Moses; What of thy brother Aaron (the Levite) ['The Levite'; this description seems out of place here; it is perhaps due to some corruption of the text.]? he asked. I know him to be a man of ready speech. He is even now on his way to meet thee, and will give thee a joyful welcome when he finds thee.
Translation for Translators	Then Yahweh became very angry with Moses/me. He said, " <i>What about your older brother Aaron, who is also a descendant of Levi? I know that he is a very good/eloquent speaker. He is actually on his way here right now, and he will be very happy to see you..</i>

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	The blustering of Jehovah was to burn against Moses. He was to say: Aaron, the Levite, your brother, I am to have known was to speak a speaking for you. He is to come out to meet you, he is to have perceived you, and is to have been glad in the sensibility of his hear.
Conservapedia	And the LORD grew terrifically angry at Moses. He said, "The Levite Aaron is your brother; I know that he can speak well. In fact, he is coming out to meet you, and he will be very glad to see you." One does not resign a Divine commission!
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Then the EVER-LIVING was angry with Moses, and He said; "Have you not a brother, Aaron the Levite ? I know that he can talk — and he is even now coming to seek you.
Lexham English Bible	{And Yahweh was angry with} [Literally "and the nose of Yahweh was hot against"] Moses and said, "[Is there] not Aaron your brother the Levite? I know that he certainly can speak, and also there he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will rejoice in his heart
NIV, ©2011	Then the Lord's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you.
Urim-Thummim Version	Then the anger of YHWH burned against Moses and he replied, Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. Look here, he now comes to meet you and when he sees you his heart will rejoice.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) The Heritage Bible	And the nostrils of Jehovah burned against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron, the Levite, your brother? I know by seeing that he can speak words; and also, behold, he is coming out to meet you, and he will see you, and he will rejoice in his heart.
New American Bible (2011)	Then the LORD became angry with Moses and said: I know there is your brother, Aaron the Levite, who is a good speaker; even now he is on his way to meet you. When he sees you, he will truly be glad.
New Jerusalem Bible	At this, Yahweh's anger kindled against Moses, and he said to him, 'There is your brother Aaron the Levite, is there not? I know that he is a good speaker. Here he comes to meet you. When he sees you, his heart will be full of joy.

Revised English Bible At this the LORD became angry with Moses: "Do you not have a brother, Aaron the Levite? He, I know, will do all the speaking. He is already on his way out to meet you, and he will be overjoyed when he sees you.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible At this, *ADONAI'S* anger blazed up against Moshe; he said, "Don't you have a brother, Aharon the Levi? I know that he's a good speaker. In fact, here he is now, coming out to meet you; and he'll be happy to see you.

exeGesés companion Bible And the wrath of Yah Veh kindles against Mosheh, and he says, Is not Aharon the Leviy your brother? I know that in wording, he words well: and also, behold, he comes to meet you: and when he sees you, he cheers in his heart.

JPS (Tanakh—1985) The Lord became angry with Moses, and He said, "There is your brother Aaron the Levite. He, I know, speaks readily. Even now he is setting out to meet you, and he will be happy to see you.

Kaplan Translation God displayed anger toward Moses. 'Is not Aaron the Levite your brother?' He said. 'I know that he knows how to speak! He is setting out to meet you, and when he sees you, his heart will be glad.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And the Af Hashem was kindled against Moshe, and He said, Is there not Aharon thy ach the Levi? I know that he can speak well. And also, hinei, he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his lev.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible **Aaron to Speak for Moses**
Then the anger of the Lord was kindled and burned against Moses; He said, "Is there not your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. Also, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be overjoyed.

The Expanded Bible The LORD became angry with Moses and said, "[^LDo I not know that...?] Your brother Aaron, from the family of Levi, is a ·skilled [fluent; smooth] speaker. He is already coming to meet you, and ·he will be happy [^Lhis heart will rejoice] when he sees you.

Kretzmann's Commentary And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said, Is not Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? The Lord implied that Aaron surely was more worthy of being called a descendant of Levi than Moses with his hesitation. I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee, for the Lord had arranged for this; and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. Aaron could indeed make fine speeches, and he would be delighted to be connected with this mission as the spokesman.

NET Bible® Then the Lord became angry with [*Heb* "and the anger of Yahweh burned against."] Moses, and he said, "What about [*Heb* "Is not" or perhaps "Is [there] not."] your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he can speak very well. Moreover, he is coming to meet you, and when he sees you he will be glad in his heart.

Syndein/Thieme And the anger of Jehovah/God was kindled against Moses, and He said, "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. {this is Divine Sarcasm - Aaron is weak and not a good orator at all} And also, behold, he comes forth to meet you.

The Voice Then the Eternal became angry with Moses.
Eternal One: How about your brother—Aaron the Levite? I know he speaks eloquently. And look, he is already on his way to meet you. When he sees you, his heart will be delighted.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and "YHWH ^{He Is} " flared up the nose (with) "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} " and he said, is not "Aharon ^{Light bringer} " your brother, the one of "Lewi ^{My joining} "? I know that he will :surely: speak well, also look, he is going out to meet you and he will see you and he will rejoice in his heart,...
Concordant Literal Version	Then the anger of Yahweh grew hot against Moses. And He said: Is there not Aaron, the Levite, your brother? I know that he can speak, yea speak. And, moreover, behold, he is coming forth to meet you, and he will see you and rejoice in his heart.
English Standard Version	Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.
Green's Literal Translation	And the anger of Jehovah glowed against Moses. And He said, Do I not know your brother, Aaron the Levite, that he can speak well? And, behold, he also is coming out to meet you, and he will see you and be glad in his heart.
Modern English Version	The anger of the LORD was inflamed against Moses, and He said, "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, he comes out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.
NASB	Aaron to Be Moses' Mouthpiece 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.
Stuart Wolf A Voice in the Wilderness	. And the anger of Jehovah burned against Moses, and He said: Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can form words to speak. And behold, he is also coming out to meet you; and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.
World English Bible	Yahweh's anger burned against Moses, and he said, "What about Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Also, behold, he comes out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.
Young's Updated LT	And the anger of Jehovah burns against Moses, and He says, "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I have known that he speaks well, and also, lo, he is coming out to meet you; when he has seen you, then he has rejoiced in his heart.

The gist of this passage:

Exodus 4:14a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
chârâh (חָרָה) [pronounced <i>khaw-RAWH</i>]	<i>to burn, to kindle, to become angry, to burn with anger; to evoke great emotion</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2734 BDB #354
'aph (אָפַח) [pronounced <i>ahf</i>]	<i>nose, nostril, but is also translated face, brow, anger, wrath</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #639 BDB #60
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Exodus 4:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602

Translation: The anger of Y^ehowah is kindled against Moses,...

God is not impatient and God does not become angry with us. This is language of accommodation, bringing God's actions into a the realm of human nature so that we can better understand what God is doing.

The NET Bible: *Moses had not dared openly to say "except me" when he asked God to send whomever he wanted to send. But God knew that is what he meant. Moses should not have resisted the call or pleaded such excuses or hesitated with such weak faith. Now God abandoned the gentle answer and in anger brought in a form of retribution. Because Moses did not want to do this, he was punished by not having the honor of doing it alone. His reluctance and the result are like the refusal of Israel to enter the land and the result they experienced (see U. Cassuto, Exodus, 49-50).*³⁴

Interestingly enough, God does not chew out Moses or swear; God instead is sarcastic.

Exodus 4:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hă (ה) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong's #none BDB #209
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

³⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

Exodus 4:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾAhārōn (אֲהָרֹן) [pronounced <i>ah-huh-ROHN</i>]	transliterated <i>Aaron</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #175 BDB #14
ʾāch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i>]	<i>brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
Lêvîy (לֵוִי) [pronounced <i>lay-VEE</i>]	<i>joined to, attached; garland, crown; and is transliterated Levite</i>	gentilic adjective with the definite article	Strong's #3881 BDB #532

This is the first time that this proper noun is found in the Bible. However, it is identical to the proper noun *Levi*. Context determines how this word should be understood.

The NET Bible: S. R. Driver (*Exodus, 29*) suggests that the term “Levite” may refer to a profession rather than ancestry here, because both Moses and Aaron were from the tribe of Levi and there would be little point in noting that ancestry for Aaron. In thinking through the difficult problem of the identity of Levites, he cites McNeile as saying “the Levite” referred to one who had had official training as a priest (cf. Judg 17:7, where a member of the tribe of Judah was a Levite). If it was the duty of the priest to give “torah” – to teach – then some training in the power of language would have been in order.³⁵

Translation: ...and He said, “Is [there] not your brother Aaron, the Levite?”

God asks Moses, “Don’t you have a brother? Isn’t that Aaron, the Levite?” Moses has an older brother and sister, both of whom he knew as a child; and both of whom he was aware of, but contact was likely very limited and eventually cut off.

Exodus 4:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâdaʿ (יָדָע) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHĠ</i>]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

³⁵ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

Exodus 4:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dābar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	Piel infinitive absolute	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
<p>The infinitive absolute has four uses: ❶ when found alone, it sometimes acts as an English gerund, so that we may add <i>ing</i> to the end of the verb; ❷ When found directly before its verbal cognate, it serves to intensify or strengthen the action or the meaning of the verb which follows; ❸ When it follows its cognate verb, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea; and, ❹ it is sometimes used as a substitute for a finite verb form.³⁶</p>			
dābar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The construction uses the Piel infinitive absolute and the Piel imperfect to express the idea that he spoke very well: דָּבַר דָּבַר (dabber yak dabber).</i>³⁷</p>			
<p>The NET Bible: <i>Now Yahweh, in condescending to Moses, selects something that Moses (and God) did not really need for the work. It is as if he were saying: "If Moses feels speaking ability is so necessary (rather than the divine presence), then that is what he will have." Of course, this golden-tongued Aaron had some smooth words about how the golden calf was forged!</i>³⁸</p>			
<p>I am not sure that God is saying that Aaron is a great spokesman. This sounds a lot more like, "I know in talking, he talks [a lot]."</p>			
hūw' (אוּה) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; him, himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

Translation: I know that he [even] he talks a lot.

Here is the sarcasm. "Well, that Aaron, boy, he does talk a lot, doesn't he?" Or, "You have a brother Aaron; and he is a quite the talker, is he not?"

God knew in eternity past that there was no one else for this job other than Moses. He was the perfect person to perform these miracles and to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. He was also aware that Moses would refuse to lead the children of Israel and that Moses would refuse to stand up to Pharaoh. Moses needs someone

³⁶ *Biblical Hebrew*; Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

³⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

³⁸ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

there to hold his hand. So God provided Aaron, the brother of Moses, in eternity past. The way that this is expressed is somewhat humorous: "What about your brother, Aaron? I know that he can speak."

Actually, the Hebrew word is our common word for speaking: *dâbar* (דָּבַר) [pronounced *daw-BAR*]. This is first found in the Piel infinitive absolute and then in the Piel imperfect. The double use of this word means that Aaron can undoubtedly speak. Normally the Piel tense would stand out as being quite intensive, but *dâbar* is found in the Piel much more often than in any other stem. We will see that, although Aaron is enthusiastic and eager to please, he does not have what it takes to stand up to Pharaoh or to lead the Israelites. As Thieme paints this picture, Aaron will be the spokesman for Moses until Moses finally gets tired of listening to him handle it the wrong way so that he finally pushes Aaron aside and speaks directly to Pharaoh.

There are not many translations which explain it in this way (which I attribute to the powerful influence of the KJV). The Lord became angry with Moses, and He said, "There is your brother Aaron the Levite. He, I know, speaks readily. Even now he is setting out to meet you, and he will be happy to see you. (JPS; 1985) And the anger of Jehovah burned against Moses, and He said: Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can form words to speak. And behold, he is also coming out to meet you; and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. (VW; emphasis mine in both translations) The Lexham English Bible: "[Is there] not Aaron your brother the Levite? I know that he certainly can speak... The doubling of the verb does not necessarily mean that Aaron speaks eloquently; but he may simply speak often, authoritatively, or energetically. A few translators understood this.

It says that God is angry with Moses; so does it not make sense that what God says might be somewhat insulting?

Exodus 4:14a-c 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.

God does not actually get angry—He knew in eternity past just exactly how Moses would respond—which is going to be clear in this and the next few verses. The use of emotions in reference to God expresses the actions of God in terms that we might better understand. This is a way of making God more relatable. While reading this narrative, you may have thought, *I'd be angry at Moses if I were God*. So, when the Bible speaks of the anger of God, this makes sense to you and I.

If I personally was the one telling Moses what he needed to do and how is able to handle this assignment—I might become frustrated and angry with him as he continues to say, "No, I can't do it; no I don't want to do it." I understand what God should be feeling (God does not have such feelings). But this is why He is so described; to help me as a man with emotions to understand Him.

Exodus 4:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean <i>and also, together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore</i> .			
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243

Exodus 4:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The NET Bible: <i>The particle הִנֵּה (hinneh) with the participle points to the imminent future; it means "he is about to come" or "here he is coming."</i> ³⁹			
hûw' (אוּה) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; him, himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>going [coming] out, going [coming] forth; rising</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ' (אָרַךְ) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896

Translation: And, look, he is coming out to meet you,...

God knew all that Moses was going to say in eternity past, and God was aware that Moses would continue to object, so plan B (because Moses has rejected plan A) is for Aaron to become Moses' spokesperson.

You may be aware of the singer Prince, recently deceased (recently, as to the beginning of this writing); and apparently, Prince **had a difficult time in social situations**, so, he would whisper to a friend of his and have the friend convey whatever message he wanted to convey (the other person might be standing 10 feet away). Well, Moses is going to be *Prince* for awhile—but Moses is not really that shy. Bear in mind, Moses has been arguing with God over the past 10 or 20 minutes, eloquently about how he is inarticulate.

It just so happens that Aaron is going to meet Moses—and we really do not know how that was all arranged at this point. Let me suggest that God was fully aware of this and that His plan included for Moses and Aaron to go forth as a team, although it is quite likely that Moses would have done a better job by himself.

Exodus 4:14e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

³⁹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

Exodus 4:14e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sâmach (שמח) [pronounced saw- MAHKH]	<i>to rejoice, to be glad, to be joyful, to be merry</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8055 BDB #970
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
lêb (לב) [pronounced lay ^b v]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524

Translation: ...and [when] he sees you, he will be happy in his heart.

Aaron is going to be quite happy to meet up with Moses, his younger brother.

The NET Bible: *It is unlikely that this simply means that as a brother he will be pleased to see Moses, for the narrative has no time for that kind of comment. It is interested in more significant things. The implication is that Aaron will rejoice because of the revelation of God to Moses and the plan to deliver Israel from bondage (see B. Jacob, Exodus, 93).*⁴⁰ Let me think about this comment.

Exodus 4:14 The anger of Y^ehowah is kindled against Moses, and He said, "Is [there] not your brother Aaron, the Levite? I know that he [even] he talks a lot. And, look, he is coming out to meet you, and [when] he sees you, he will be happy in his heart. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Moses and his brother have not spoken for at least 40 years; and possibly even for a longer period of time than that. There is nothing to indicate that Moses maintained contact with his family during his first 40 years of life. When Moses leaves Egypt, the entire episode appears to have been quite organic and quite sudden. That is, one day he just goes out to interact with his people (those with whom he was genetically related) and a day or so later, Moses is making a run for it. There is no suggestion that his interaction with the Jewish people was much longer in duration than the time frame laid out by Scripture. Reading in weeks, months or years of contract would be difficult to do an not really match the narrative.

There is an important shadow here. Aaron becomes a part of God's plan by virtue of the fact that he is related to Moses. There are a number of greater men in Israel than Aaron—however, only Aaron is the brother of Moses. Aaron will become a **High Priest** and all those who are descended from him will be priests or high priests. They are so designated because of their relationship to Aaron and he is so placed in God's plan because of his relationship to Moses. Here's the deal: we have nothing whatsoever to recommend ourselves to God. We are in absolute opposition to God. We should expect condemnation. However, because we are in Christ—because of our relationship to Christ Jesus, we are accepted in the beloved. In fact, we are a nation of priests. What we have is a parallel situation. Moses is representative of Christ—the Great Prophet Who would come. Aaron has a place in God's plan, as do all of his descendants, simply because of his relationship to Moses. We have our place in God's plan simply because of our relationship to Christ Jesus. We have nothing else to recommend us.

⁴⁰ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 14, 2017.

Exodus 4:14 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. (NKJV)

Interestingly enough, Moses does not appear to catch on how far in advance that God has worked all of this out. But, right at this moment, Aaron is walking towards Moses to reconnect (Aaron is miles away, but he started on this trip to meet Moses long before this conversation between Moses and God takes place). God knew what Moses would say, and so God's plan anticipates the free will of Moses, and his limited negative volition.

We do not know what has precipitated this. How is Aaron suddenly coming out to meet Moses? When did that happen? How did it happen? God knew in eternity past what Moses would say, and God has made provision for it. However, we have no idea exactly how Aaron was caused to move towards Moses (obviously, God did the causing). And, in order for Moses to meet Aaron in the next day or so, Aaron had to have been sent out long before this conversation between Moses and God takes place. Obviously, God already knew what Moses was going to say. God knew Moses' objections and his reticence, and He made provision for that.

God does not stop Moses mid-sentence and say, "Look, I know what you're going to say, and I have made provision for it." God lets Moses talk himself out. Then God tells Moses, "You are worried about being tongue-tied? I have got this covered. Your brother Aaron is on his way right now. He'll do all of your public speaking for you."

If Aaron is on his way to meet Moses right this moment, then God organized all of this a long time ago (we understand God's plan to be in existence from eternity past).

The obvious application is, no matter what is occurring in our life, no matter what difficulty that we face, God was aware of it in eternity past and He made provision for it in eternity past—and He even takes into consideration our positive or negative volition.

Exodus 4:14 The anger of Jehovah burned against Moses, and He said, "Don't you have a brother, Aaron, the Levite? I am aware that he is quite the talker. And what do you know, he is coming out to meet you—right now. When he sees you, he will be overjoyed. (Kukis paraphrase)

The meaning of this passage is fairly easy to understand. Translating it word-for-word is a bit more difficult, however.

And you have spoken unto him and you have put the words in his mouth and I, [even] I, will be with your mouth and with his mouth; and I have taught you [all] what you [all] will do. And he has spoken him for you unto the people and he has been he, [even] he, will be for you for a mouth and you, [even] you, are to him for an Elohim.

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4:15–16

So you will speak to him and put the words into his mouth while I, [even] I, will be with your mouth and his mouth; and I will teach you [both] what you will do. And he [Aaron] will speak—him instead of you—to the people; and it will be, he, [even] he, will be your mouth and you, [even] you, will be his Elohim.

This is how we will do it. You will speak to him and tell him what to say. I will be with you to guide you what what to say to him; and I will teach both of you what to do. Aaron, therefore, will speak to the people instead of you. He will be your mouth and you will be like God to him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And you have spoken unto him and you have put the words in his mouth and I, [even] I, will be with your mouth and with his mouth; and I have taught you [all] what you [all] will do. And he has spoken him for you unto the people and he has been he, [even] he, will be for you for a mouth and you, [even] you, are to him for an Elohim.
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum of Onkelos	. And thou shalt speak with him, and put the words in his mouth; and My Word will be with thy mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what to do. And he shall speak for thee with the people, and shall be thy interpreter, and thou shalt be to him a rab;...
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And thou shalt speak with him, and put the matter in his mouth, and My Word shall be with the word of thy mouth, and with the word of his mouth, and I will instruct you what you are to do. And he shall speak for thee with the people, and be to thee an interpreter, and thou to him the principal, seeking instruction from before the Lord. [JERUSALEM. He shall be to thee an interpreter, and thou to him one inquiring instruction from before the Lord.]
Revised Douay-Rheims	Speak to him, and put my words in his mouth: and I will be in thy mouth, and in his mouth, and will shew you what you must do. He shall speak in thy stead to the people, and shall be thy mouth: but thou shalt be to him in those things that pertain to God.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	You shall speak to him, and put the words in his mouth. I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. He will be your spokesman to the people; and it will happen, that he will be to you a mouth, and you will be to him as God.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And you shall speak to him and put my words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. And he shall be your spokesman to the people; and he shall be an interpreter for you, and you shall be to him instead of God.
Septuagint (Greek)	And you shall speak to him; and you shall put my words into his mouth, and I will open your mouth and his mouth, and I will instruct you in what you shall do. And he shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be for him in things pertaining to God.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Let him give ear to your voice, and you will put my words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and with his, teaching you what you have to do. 16 And he will do the talking for you to the people: he will be to you as a mouth and you will be to him as God.
Easy English	Then you must speak to him. You must tell him what to say. I will help both of you to speak. And I will teach you what you must do. Aaron will speak to the people for you. You will be like God to him. You will tell Aaron what to say.
Good News Bible (TEV)	You can speak to him and tell him what to say. I will help both of you to speak, and I will tell you both what to do. He will be your spokesman and speak to the people for you. Then you will be like God, telling him what to say.
<i>The Message</i>	You'll speak to him and tell him what to say. I'll be right there with you as you speak and with him as he speaks, teaching you step by step. He will speak to the people for you. He'll act as your mouth, but you'll decide what comes out of it.
Names of God Bible	You will speak to him and tell him what to say. I will help both of you speak, and I will teach you both what to do. Aaron will speak to the people for you. He will be your spokesman, and you will be like Elohim .

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Speak to him and tell him what he's supposed to say. I'll help both of you speak, and I'll teach both of you what to do. Aaron will speak for you to the people. He'll be a spokesperson for you, and you will be like God for him.
Contemporary English V.	Aaron will speak to the people for you, and you will be like me, telling Aaron what to say. I will be with both of you as you speak, and I will tell each of you what to do.
The Living Bible	So I will tell you what to tell him, and I will help both of you to speak well, and I will tell you what to do. He will be your spokesman to the people. And you will be as God to him, telling him what to say.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Century Version	You will speak to Aaron and tell him what to say. I will help both of you to speak and will teach you what to do. Aaron will speak to the people for you. You will tell him what God says, and he will speak for you.
New Life Version	You must speak to him and put the words in his mouth. I will be with your mouth and his mouth. I will teach you what you are to do. He will speak to the people for you. He will be a mouth for you. And you will be as God to him.
New Living Translation	Talk to him, and put the words in his mouth. I will be with both of you as you speak, and I will instruct you both in what to do. Aaron will be your spokesman to the people. He will be your mouthpiece, and you will stand in the place of God for him, telling him what to say.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then you must talk to him and put My words into his mouth, and I'll open both of your mouths and tell you what to say. Let him speak to the people for you... he'll serve as your mouth and you will be the things of God to him.
Beck's American Translation	.
International Standard V	You're to speak to him and tell him what to say [Lit. <i>put the words in his mouth</i>]. I'll help both you and him with your speech [Lit. <i>I'll be with your mouth and with his mouth</i>], and I'll teach both of you what you are to do. He is to speak to the people for you as your spokesman [Lit. <i>be your mouth</i>] and you are to act in the role of [Lit. <i>be</i>] God for him.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	To him thou shalt repeat my message, entrusting it to his lips; through his lips I will speak, and through thine, telling you what I would have you do. He shall be thy spokesman, giving out thy message to the people, and thou shalt be his representative with God ['Thou shalt be his representative with God'; literally, 'thou shalt be to him in those things which concern God'. The Hebrew text has, 'Thou shalt be to him (for) a God'.].
Translation for Translators	You can keep talking to him and telling him what to say [MTY], and I will help both of you [SYN] to know what to say [MTY]. And I will tell you both what you should do. He will speak for you to the <i>Israeli</i> people. He will be <your spokesman/as though he was your mouth> [MET], and you will be as though you are his god.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	You is to have spoken to him, and is to have placed the concern in his mouth. Even from my mouth to your mouth, and I am to have pointed out that you was to prepare. He is to have spoken to the people, by the mouth of he of mighty ones.
Conservapedia	"You will speak to him, and tell him what to say, and I'll be with both of you as you speak, and will teach you what to do. He will be your spokesman to the people, almost as your mouth, and you will stand in relation to him as I stand to you."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	See that you can go cheerfully with him, and speak to him, and put words into his mouth, for I will be with your mouth, and in his mouth, and will show you what you

are to do, and he shall speak for you to the people. He shall be like a mouth for you, and you shall be to him in place of God. Verse delineation in the F–F Bible can sometimes be difficult to ascertain. I may be including a portion of v. 14 here.

HCSB You will speak with him and tell him what to say. I will help both you and him to speak and will teach you both what to do. He will speak to the people for you. He will be your spokesman, and you will serve as God to him.

Tree of Life Version You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth. I will be with your mouth and with his, and teach you what to do. He will be your spokesman to the people, so that he may act as a mouthpiece for you, and it will be as if you were as God for him.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) You will speak to him and tell him what I have told you to say. And when you tell him, or when he speaks, I will be with you and teach you what you have to say. Aaron will speak for you as a prophet speaks for his god.

The Heritage Bible And you shall speak to him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth, and will cause to flow to you what you shall do. And he shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be - he shall be - to you for a mouth, and you shall be to him for God.

New American Bible (2011) You will speak to him and put the words in his mouth. I will assist both you and him in speaking and teach you both what you are to do. He will speak to the people for you: he will be your spokesman, and you will be as God to him.

Spokesman: lit., “mouth”; Aaron was to serve as a mouthpiece for Moses, as a prophet does for God; hence the relation between Moses and Aaron is compared to that between God and his prophet: Moses “will be as God to,” i.e., lit., “will become God for him.” Cf. 7:1.

New Jerusalem Bible You will speak to him and tell him what message to give. I shall help you speak, and him too, and instruct you what to do. He will speak to the people in your place; he will be your mouthpiece, and you will be as the god inspiring him.

Revised English Bible You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; I shall help both of you to speak and tell you both what to do. He will do all the speaking to the people for you; he will be the mouthpiece, and you will be the god he speaks for.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible You will speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and his, teaching you both what to do. Thus he will be your spokesman to the people, in effect; for you, he will be a mouth; and for him, you will be like God.

exeGesés companion Bible ...and you word to him and put words in his mouth:
and I - I am with your mouth and with his mouth
and direct you what to work.

And he words for you to the people:
and he becomes to you in the stead of a mouth
and you become to him in the stead of Elohim:...

Hebraic Roots Bible And you shall speak to him, and you shall 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. And he shall speak for you to the people. And it shall be, he shall be a mouth for you, and you shall be a Mighty One (Elohim) for him.

Israeli Authorized Version And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of Elohim.

Kaplan Translation	You will be able to speak to him, and place the words in his mouth. I will then be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you. He will be your spokesman [Literally, 'mouth.'], and you will be his guide [(Ralbag). Literally, 'God' or 'judge.' Or, 'master' (Targum; Rashi; Rashbam).].
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and Eh-heh-yeh (I will be) with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of Elohim.
The Scriptures 1998	“And you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I am with your mouth and with his mouth, and I shall teach you what to do. “And he shall speak for you to the people. And it shall be that he shall be a mouth for you, and you shall be an elohim [Or mighty one, which is proof that elohim is but a title, indicating order or authority – it is not a proper name.] for him.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible	You must speak to him and put the words in his mouth; I, even I, will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; he will act as a mouthpiece for you, and you will be as God to him [telling him what I say to you].
The Expanded Bible	You will speak to Aaron and ·tell him what to say [·place your words in his mouth]. I will ·help both of you to speak [·be with your mouth and with his mouth] and will teach you what to do. Aaron will speak to the people for you. ·You will tell him what God says, and he will speak for you [·He will be your mouth and you will be like God to him].
Kretzmann's Commentary	And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God, to make known to him both the form and the contents of his speeches to the people. As Moses, the prophet, speaks only what God commands him to say, thus Aaron was to defer to Moses in stating only what Moses told him. "He that has the Word of God and is a believer has the Spirit and the power of God, also divine wisdom, truth, heart, mind, and disposition, and everything that pertains to God." (Luther.).
NET Bible®	“So you are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And as for me, I will be with your mouth [Or “I will help you speak.” The independent pronoun puts emphasis (“as for me”) on the subject (“I”).] and with his mouth [Or “and will help him speak.”], and I will teach you both [The word “both” is supplied to convey that this object (“you”) and the subject of the next verb (“you must do”) are plural in the Hebrew text, referring to Moses and Aaron. In 4:16 “you” returns to being singular in reference to Moses.] what you must do. He will speak for you to the people, and it will be as if [The phrase “as if” is supplied for clarity.] he [Heb “and it will be [that] he, he will be to you for a mouth,” or more simply, “he will be your mouth.”] were your mouth [Heb “he will be to you for a mouth.”] and as if you were his God [The phrase “as if” is supplied for clarity. The word “you” represents the Hebrew independent pronoun, which makes the subject emphatic.].
Syndein/Thieme	And you shall speak unto him, and put words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. And he shall be your spokesman unto the people. {this is great discipline to a superior speaker to have to let a poorer speaker do his talking for him} And he shall be, even he shall be to you instead of a mouth, and you shall be to him in the place of 'Elohim/Godhead. {meaning Moses will be Aaron's direct teacher as God was his direct teacher}.

The Voice **Eternal One:** I want you to talk to him and put the *right* words in his mouth. I will guide your mouth and his mouth and instruct you both on what you should do. He will address the people as your spokesman. He will serve as your mouth; and you will instruct him in what he is to say as if you were God to him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and you will speak to him, and you will place the words in his mouth, and I will exist with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will [teach] you (what) you must do, and he will speak (for) you to the people, and (it) will (come to pass), he will exist (for) you (as) a mouth and you, you will exist (for) him (as) "Elohiym ^{Powers}",...

Context Group Version And you shall speak to him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you (pl) what you (pl) shall do. And he shall be your spokesman to the people; and he shall be to you a mouth, and you shall be to him as God.

Emphasized Bible Then shalt thou speak unto him, and shalt put the words in his mouth,—and, I, will be with thy mouth and with his mouth, so will I direct you what ye shall do. And, he, shall speak for thee unto the people,—so shall it come to pass that he shall become thy mouth, and thou shalt become to him as God.

Green’s Literal Translation NASB .
Aaron to Be Moses’ Mouthpiece

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. 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. 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. V. 14 is included for context.

New King James Version 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.

Stuart Wolf Young’s Updated LT .
 And you have spoken unto him, and have set the words in his mouth, and I—I am with your mouth, and with his mouth, and have directed you that which you [all] do. And he, he has spoken for you unto the people, and it has come to pass, he—he is to you for a mouth, and you—you are to him for God;...

The gist of this passage: God will be with Moses; and what Moses needs to tell Pharaoh (or the elders), he will tell Aaron and Aaron will speak for him.

15-16

Exodus 4:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וי) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251

Exodus 4:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh'l]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sîym (שִׂים) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sūwm (שׂוּם) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
d ^e bârîym (דְּבָרִים) [pronounced daw ^b -vawr-EEM]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, affairs; reports</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6310 BDB #804

Translation: So you will speak to him and put the words into his mouth...

God knew from eternity past the objections that Moses would have, and He knew how to deal with them. Moses and Aaron are going to act, at the first, like a team. Moses would speak to him and put the words into his mouth—that is, Moses would tell him what to say.

Exodus 4:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
'îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6310 BDB #804

Translation: ...while I, [even] I, will be with your mouth and his mouth;...

God promises to be with Moses' mouth (and Moses will not be speaking, except to Aaron); and God would be with Aaron as well.

Now, you might think, "Well, why do it this way? Why not cut out the middle man and go with Aaron?" The people of Israel will be led by Moses, and not by Aaron. Aaron is simply there because Moses does not have enough confidence in God and God's Word.

R. B. Thieme, Jr. has often described it this way, *Moses has told Aaron what to say, and Aaron is unable to say it correctly or speak eloquently enough or fast enough, until Moses finally shoves Aaron out of the way and Moses then speaks directly to Pharaoh.*⁴¹

We tend to remember Moses as a powerful leader, but that is not the way that he started.

⁴¹ This is not a direct quote, but the gist from what I recall Bob saying several times in class.

Exodus 4:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yârâ' (יָרָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to throw, cast; to shoot; to point out, show; to direct, teach, instruct; to throw water, rain</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3384 BDB #432
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>you; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to you, toward you</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, they mean <i>how, that which, what, whatever; whom, whomever. Possibly when, whenever.</i>			
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

The NET Bible: *The imperfect tense carries the obligatory nuance here as well. The relative pronoun with this verb forms a noun clause functioning as the direct object of "I will teach."*⁴²

Translation: ...and I will teach you [both] what you will do.

At this point, we go to the masculine plural, where God will tell Moses and Aaron what to do.

Exodus 4:15 Now you [Moses] shall speak to him [Aaron] 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. (NKJV)

Exodus 4:15–16 So you will speak to him and put the words into his mouth while I, [even] I, will be with your mouth and his mouth; and I will teach you [both] what you will do. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

God is telling Moses, "Listen, I have got all of this handled. You don't need to worry about thinking fast and speaking. Aaron will do that part." This is a job, by the way, for which Aaron has had no training. Even if this entered into Moses' mind, he cannot very well use that argument, because it tends to invalidate his position that there must be someone out there better for this job. Moses cannot object and say, "Well, Aaron has no training." He can't say that because Moses has had training.

Also, Moses certainly cannot say, "Well, I cannot speak to Aaron; I am not a good speaker." Aaron is his brother. All he has to do is be a conduit between God and Aaron. So he does not have that excuse. Surely he is able to speak to his own brother. Essentially, what is really happening is, God is sending Aaron along to hold Moses' hand.

⁴² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 16, 2017.

Interestingly enough, at some point when speaking to Pharaoh, Moses will no longer require Aaron to speak for him. Things will become rather intense and Moses will find himself at a point where he just cannot be bothered to stop and whisper to Aaron what he needs to say. Moses will just blurt it out. It will be a fairly subtle set of circumstances—at least in the recording of it. We will not read the words, *and Moses shoved Aaron out of the way and got right up in Pharaoh's face*. But, more or less, this is what will happen.

All of this is going to become rather convoluted. God speaks to Moses then Moses speaks to Aaron, and then Aaron speaks to Pharaoh. At some point, without thinking, Moses is going to start speaking to Pharaoh himself.

As an aside, the recording of these things could also become quite convoluted—God speaking to Moses, Moses speaking to Aaron and, finally, Aaron speaking to Pharaoh. No worries here. The narrative as recorded in Exodus is far more abbreviated than that. We will know that this is going on when we read, *and they said to Pharaoh*; and we will know that Moses has stepped in to bypass Aaron, when we read, *and he said to Pharaoh*.

God continues speaking to Moses, telling him what Aaron needs to say and do.

Exodus 4:16a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAHR</i>]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
hûw' (אוּה) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>he, it; him, himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'am (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: And he [Aaron] will speak—him instead of you—to the people;...

God has agreed that someone other than Moses will act as the spokesman. God tells Moses, “Aaron—I’ve heard that he knows how to talk—so he will be your spokesman.”

Exodus 4:16b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>he, it; him, himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced <i>peh</i>]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6310 BDB #804

Translation: ...and it will be, he, [even] he, will be your mouth...

The emphasis here is difficult to show; but God is emphasizing that “Aaron—he will act as your spokesman.” Replacing *mouth* with *spokesman* would be a reasonable translation.

Then God says something which is quite weird:

Exodus 4:16c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i>]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
hâyâh (הֵיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: ...and you, [even] you, will be his Elohim.

I have taken some liberties, eliminating some of the emphasis found here. Literally, this reads, ...and you, [even] you, will be to him for an Elohim. One could translate this, ...you will be like a god to him.

In v. 16, we have the absolute status quo verb *to be* hâyâh (הֵיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*] used twice here. It is first in the Qal perfect with a subject which is not altogether clear; and it immediately follows in the Qal imperfect. We could also translate this as: *he has become and he will continue to become a mouth on your behalf and you will be to him as God.*

Exodus 4:16 *And he [Aaron] will speak—him instead of you—to the people; and it will be, he, [even] he, will be your mouth and you, [even] you, will be his Elohim.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

So God will speak to Moses; Moses will tell Aaron what to say, and Aaron will speak to Pharaoh, on behalf of God. What Moses says to Aaron will be just as though God is speaking to Aaron—therefore, Moses will become as God to Aaron. Although this is God's second choice as to how things should be done; He does allow Moses his free will. What God would prefer (and it will eventually occur this way) is that there will be one man between Himself and Pharaoh; one mediator speaking God's Word to Pharaoh. That sets up a better shadow image of Jesus Christ revealing God to man and the perfect God-man, the One Mediator between God and man. Throughout the Old Testament, God will continually use spiritual men who both act in the process of His plan and also act as a shadow of good things to come.

"You will be God to Aaron." That is, what you say will be absolute Law. God knew what would happen between Moses and himself; and that Moses' words would become absolute law in nation Israel.

So, Aaron would be the mouth for Moses, but Moses would be like God to Aaron.

The NET Bible: *Moses will be like God to Aaron, giving him the words to say, inspiring him as God would inspire a prophet. The whole process had now been removed one step. Instead of God speaking to Moses and Moses telling the people, Aaron would be the speaker for a while. But God was still going to work through Moses.*⁴³

One of the great controversies of the book of Exodus is, does God really harden Pharaoh's heart? Is Pharaoh just about to give in to the pressure, and God gives him an extra shot of negative volition (as if a shot of adrenalin?). One must recognize that God has put forth His best arguments, and Moses is still saying, "I am not going to do it. I will not go to Pharaoh and speak in front of him." God clearly respects Moses' volition and has already made provision for it.

Exodus 4:16 **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.** (NKJV)

God would speak to Moses and then Moses would communicate divine instructions to Aaron, and then Aaron would speak these things to Pharaoh. Since these are divine instructions, Moses will be like God to Aaron.

For me, I cannot get over envisioning this as being somewhat similar to Fred Armisen playing Prince and whispering to Beyonce (Maya Rudolph) in order to communicate to his audience (at the 50 second mark [here](#)).

This reveals God's sense of humor, because whatever Moses says to Aaron, Aaron is going to simply repeat to Pharaoh (or to the elders when Moses meets them to begin with). Moses, grudgingly, is going to find this acceptable. God has boxed him into a corner here.

Exodus 4:15–16 **So you will speak to him and put the words into his mouth while I, [even] I, will be with your mouth and his mouth; and I will teach you [both] what you will do. And he [Aaron] will speak—him instead of you—to the people; and it will be, he, [even] he, will be your mouth and you, [even] you, will be his Elohim.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:15–16 **This is how we will do it. You will speak to him and tell him what to say. I will be with you to guide you what what to say to him; and I will teach both of you what to do. Aaron, therefore, will speak to the people instead of you. He will be your mouth and you will be like God to him.** (Kukis paraphrase)

To be clear, God is not forcing Moses to do anything here; God is simply answering all of his objections and saying, "I have made provision for that." We will come to a point where Moses no longer has any reason to object to what God wants him to do. Moses is unable to come up with a counter-argument. Moses will finally go along with God's plan as an exercise of his own free will.

We are still out in the desert-wilderness of Midian and God is giving His final instructions to Moses. Moses has finally agreed to do what God has called him to do (which involves using his brother Aaron as a go-between to Pharaoh), and God is firming up the final details.

And the staff the this you will take in your hand which you will do in him the signs."

Exodus
4:17

And you will take this staff in your hand, [with] which you will perform the signs [of My power]."

And you will take this staff in your hand and with it, you will perform the signs I have shown you."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

⁴³ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 16, 2017.

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And the staff the this you will take in your hand which you will do in him the signs.”
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum of Onkelos	...and this staff thou shalt take in thy hand wherewith to work the signs.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And this rod take thou in thy hand to work therewith the signs.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And take this rod in thy hand, wherewith thou shalt do the signs.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	You shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs.”
Peshitta (Syriac)	And you shall take this staff in your hand, with which you shall do signs.
Septuagint (Greek)	And this rod that was turned into a serpent you shall take in your hand, wherewith you shall work miracles.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Easy English	Take this stick with you. You will use this stick to do the signs.’ God gave Aaron to Moses, to give help to him.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	So go and carry your walking stick with you. Use it and the other miracles to show the people that I am with you.”
NIRV	But take this walking stick in your hand. You will be able to do signs with it.”

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Take this shepherd’s rod with you too so that you can do the signs.”
Contemporary English V.	.
The Living Bible	.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	You will take this special stick in your hand. And you will use it to make the special things happen for the people to see.”
New Living Translation	And take your shepherd’s staff with you, and use it to perform the miraculous signs I have shown you.”

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So now, take this walking stick that turned into a snake in your hands and work miracles with it!’
Beck’s American Translation	.
International Standard V	Now pick up that staff with your hand. You’ll use it to perform the signs.”
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And take this staff of thine with thee; thou hast portents to bring about by means of it.
Translation for Translators	<i>Be sure</i> to take with you the walking/shepherd's stick <i>that is in your hand</i> , because you will perform miracles with it.”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	You was to take the staff in your hand, even was you to work signs.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	And that staff; — take it in your hand, for you shall perform wonders with it.”
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	And you shall speak unto him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. And he shall be your spokesman unto the people: he shall be your mouth, and you shall be his God: and take this rod in your hand, wherewith you shall do miracles. Vv. 15–16 are included for context.
Tree of Life Version	Now then, you must take this staff in your hand to do the signs.”

Wikipedia Bible Project [And this staff, take it in your hands, that you will do the signs with.](#)"

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) [And with this staff in your hand you will work miraculous signs.](#)"
New American Bible (2011) [Take this staff in your hand; with it you are to perform the signs](#)
This staff: probably the same as that of vv. 2–4; but some understand that a new staff is now given by God to Moses.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible [Now take this staff in your hand, because you need it to perform the signs.](#)"
exeGeszes companion Bible [...and take this rod in your hand
wherewith you work signs.](#)
JPS (Tanakh—1985) [You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth—I will be with you and with
him as you speak, and tell both of you what to do—and he shall speak for you to the
people. Thus he shall serve as your spokesman, with you playing the role of God
to him, And take with you this rod, with which you shall perform the signs.](#)"
Vv. 15–16 are included for context.
Kaplan Translation [Take this staff in your hand. With it, you will perform the miracles.'](#)
Orthodox Jewish Bible [And thou shalt take this matteh in thine yad, wherewith thou shalt do haOtot.](#)

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible [You shall take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs \[the
miracles which prove I sent you\]."](#)
The Expanded Bible [Take your ·walking stick \[staff; 4:2\] ·with you \[^lin your hand\], and use it to do the
·miracles \[signs\]."](#)
Kretzmann's Commentary [And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs. The
shepherd's staff was to be a symbol of the divine signs which were to be performed
by the hand of Moses. The Lord has patience with our weakness and does not
expect too much of us, but strengthens us to remain steadfast in His service and
obedience.](#)
NET Bible® .
The Voice **Eternal One:** [Take this staff in your hand, and use it to perform the signs I have
shown you.](#)

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. [...and this branch, you will take in your hand, which is what you will do the signs
\(with\),...](#)
English Standard Version [And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs."](#)
Green's Literal Translation .
Modern English Version [You must take this rod in your hand, with which you will perform the signs."](#)
Stuart Wolf .
Third Millennium Bible [And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs."](#)
Webster's Bible Translation [And thou shalt take this rod in thy hand, with which thou shalt perform signs.](#)
Young's Updated LT [...and this rod you will take in your hand, with which you do the signs."](#)

The gist of this passage: [God reminds Moses to take the walking stick with him.](#)

Exodus 4:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
maṭṭeh (מַטֵּה) [pronounced <i>maht-TEH</i>]	<i>staff, branch, scepter, rod; branch; tribe</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4294 BDB #641
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

Translation: *And you will take this staff in your hand,...*

God tells Moses that he must take this staff (it was his staff that he probably used regularly when shepherding, and he may have discarded it, had not God said).

Moses may think that he is off the hook, if Aaron is the one who is going to do all the talking. He does not know what God has planned; but when God showed Moses how to perform these signs, that means, God expects Moses to perform the signs.

Exodus 4:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

Exodus 4:17b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
’êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
’ôwth (אוֹת) [pronounced <i>oath</i>]	<i>sign, a distinguishing mark; token, pledge; remembrance; assurance; a miraculous sign; an omen, a warning</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #226 BDB #16

Translation:...[with] which you will perform the signs [of My power].”

I have taken some liberties with the text, taking the relative pronoun and *with it* to translate *with which*.

God tells him that he will use the staff to perform the signs which God showed him.

Exodus 4:17 **And you will take this staff in your hand, [with] which you will perform the signs [of My power].”** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

It is always fascinating what God the Holy Spirit decides to include in the Word of God and what is left out. This indicates to us that Moses is going to be in the forefront. He may think that he is going to just stand in the background and Aaron is going to do all the speaking, but that is not what God has planned.

The NET Bible: Mention of the staff makes an appropriate ending to the section, for God's power (represented by the staff) will work through Moses. The applicable point that this whole section is making could be worded this way: The servants of God who sense their inadequacy must demonstrate the power of God as their sufficiency.⁴⁴

When Moses' mother, the queen, told him of his background, she possibly told him about his real family. There is no indication that they had ever met prior to this. Very likely, his birth-mother kept in touch with the queen and would inquire as to Moses and his life.

It seems reasonable that Moses' entire family knows about him all the time that he is in the Pharaoh's palace. Recall that Miriam, his older sister, watched the ark the Moses was in until the Pharaoh's daughter took up Moses; and then she retrieved her mother to feed the child until he was weaned.

God certainly knew Moses' entire background and at this point, we do not know how much about it that Moses knew. It is my educated guess (yet, at this point it is just a theory) that Moses did not fully grasp his familial background until a day or so before he went out among the Jews to observe them in slavery. He behaved as if he was seeing them in a new light, although, at forty years old, he could remember Jews being slaves under Egypt and under the authority of the palace for his entire life.

Based upon his actions when he had gone out among the Hebrew people, it does not appear that Moses fully appreciated his heritage and his people until then—and it is possible that he was not aware of it until a short time prior his going out that day.

When he went out to observe the Jews, he may have been told more details of his family and perhaps not. Since no intention of meeting his family was mentioned and since he goes out into the Jews twice without a mention of

⁴⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 16, 2017.

his family, it is my educated guess that he did not know any of the specifics of his birth at that time. However, his first visit out to the Jews in Exodus 2:11 mentions the word *brothers* twice; indicating that he knew at least at this time that these were his *relatives* by birth. Exodus 4:14 and the following verse indicates that Moses at this time knew who his family was.

Exodus 4:17 *And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs.*" (NKJV)

God has shown Moses one sign to be performed with his staff; but there will be others.

Moses is going to be doing everything, but when it comes time to speak to Pharaoh, he will lean into Aaron (everything will suddenly stop), tell Aaron what to say, and then Aaron would say the exact same thing, just louder and directly to Pharaoh.

In the actual narrative, there is almost no mention of all this interaction. We will not read, God said to Moses; then Moses whispered it to Aaron, and then Aaron stood before Pharaoh and said these words. In fact, throughout, the writer, Moses, will take a number of shortcuts when it comes to the narrative, so that we do not get overwhelmed by the details (as happened with the writer of Gen. 24).

Had the signs and miracles in Egypt been recorded in a different way—including each and every detail—the narrative would grind to a halt. This incredible series of events would have become tedious and boring. However, with the literary shortcuts applied by Moses, the impact of the signs and wonders will remain front and center throughout.

When it comes to these various signs, God is very theatrical. Most of the signs that Moses will perform will be for all of Egypt, for royalty and the common man alike. These will be signs and wonders which are played out on the main stage of the land of Egypt. Moses will take his staff and strike the ground with it, on at least one occasion; on another, he will lift up his staff high over the water (sometimes Aaron would man the staff). The staff acts to focus attention upon whatever wonder that God would perform. For the big signs and wonders, Moses is simply using his staff in order to point into the general direction of what Pharaoh and his people need to look at.

No doubt, the people who first witnessed these great wonders were Pharaoh and his cabinet; and, no doubt, they would relay to friends and family what they saw. "Then this guy Moses lifts up his staff into the air and..." So the focus is first upon Moses, then upon his staff, but then upon the great work that God does by his hand. The staff essentially points in the direction of what God is doing.

The people of Egypt would have had just the opposite experience. They would be aware of the great signs and wonders first; and then later understand that this is related to Moses and the sons of Israel. What is actually happening will be broadcast across the land, so, after 2 or 3 signs, everyone knows that these things are being done by the God of Moses. It is left to the people to conclude that their own gods are powerless against this God. Signs as Egypt has never seen before will be attributed to God.

Most of Exodus 3 and the first half of Exodus 4 have been devoted to a conversation between God and Moses. At this point in the narrative, Moses will leave for Egypt.

Had it been me dividing up the chapters, this would have been a good place to end Exodus 3 and begin Exodus 4 (the original Scriptures were written without chapter or verse divisions). That way, Exodus 3 would have included the entire conversation between Moses and God.

Because of the conversation between God and Moses, we have received a preview of the events to occur. At this point, the narrative of Moses in Egypt actually begins (not with v. 18; but soon thereafter Moses travels toward Egypt). However, there will be a serious hiccup before he gets very far.

Exodus 4:17 *And you will take this staff in your hand and with it, you will perform the signs I have shown you.*" (Kukis paraphrase)

Moses Leaves Midian, Receiving Final Instructions from God

Moses Goes to Egypt

V. 18 would have been the logical place to begin a new chapter (God and Moses' conversation continued from chapter 3 into chapter 4). Many translations have a subheading at v. 18 (the CEV, MEV, NEV, NKJV, the New Century Version, Tree of Life Version, New English Translation). Even though the chapter divisions are not inspired; pretty much every Bible translation holds to them as if they were. There is a reason for that, of course; and that is so that, when I make reference to Exodus 4:18, everyone is able to find where that passage is and what it says. So, even though I will make reference to the imperfections of the chapter divisions, we will continue to follow them.

I write this study of Scriptures as reference material for others; so, even though I would like to change the location of the chapters beginnings, that would not be of any help to someone researching the book of Exodus. Therefore, I keep to the traditional division of chapters, as does virtually every other translator and commentator.

Generally speaking, I prefer the chiasmi developed by Murai; I find them to be the most logical and obvious.

Chiasm of Exodus 4:18–31 (by Hajime Murai)

A(4:18) Words of Moses
 B(4:19) Commands of the LORD
 C(4:20-23) "If you refuse to let him go, I warn you, I will kill your son, your first-born" (4:23)
 C'(4:24-26) "the Lord came upon Moses and would have killed him" (4:24)
 B'(4:27) Commands of the LORD
 A'(4:28-31) Words of Moses

From http://www.bible.literarystructure.info/bible/02_Exodus_pericope_e.html accessed October 18, 2017.

Moses has lived in Midian half of his life, married to a Midianite woman, with whom he has 2 boys. He works for her father and has a stake in his life there. We know very little about Moses' life in Midian; but whatever this life is, it is about to be upended.

Before Moses leaves, it is logical for him to speak to his father-in-law in order to secure permission to leave. He has lived with his father-in-law for 40 years and has become a son to him; and therefore, in many ways, he has occupied the place of a son.

And so goes Moses and so he returns unto Jethro, his father-in-law, and so he says to him, "I must go, I pray you, and I must return unto my brothers who [are] in Egypt and I will see if still they [are] alive." And so says Jethro to Moses, "Go for peace."

Exodus
4:18

So Moses went and he returned to Jethro, his father-in-law, and he said to him, "Let me go, please, and let me return to my kinsmen who [are] in Egypt and I will see if they [are] still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in [lit., to, for, regarding] peace."

Moses then went and returned to Jethro, his father-in-law, saying, "I must go, if you will allow me, to return to my kinsmen who remain in Egypt, to see if they are still alive." And Jethro told Moses, "Go in peace."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so goes Moses and so he returns unto Jethro, his father-in-law, and so he says to him, "I must go, I pray you, and I must return unto my brothers who [are] in Egypt and I will see if still they [are] alive." And so says Jethro to Moses, "Go for peace."
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum of Onkelos	. And Mosheh went, and returned to Jether his father-in-law, and said to him, I will now go and return to my brethren who are in Mizraim, and see if they still live. And Jether said to Mosheh, Go in peace.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Mosheh went, and returned unto Jethro his father in law, and said, I will now go to my brethren who are in Mizraim, to see how they now live. And Jethro said to Mosheh, Go in peace.
Revised Douay-Rheims	Moses went his way, and returned to Jethro his father in law and said to him: I will go and return to my brethren into Egypt, that I may see if they be yet alive. And Jethro said to him: Go in peace.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mosha went and returned to Yethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brothers who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive." Yethro said to Mosha, "Go in peace."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Moses returned, and went to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, Let me go and return to my brethren who are in Egypt and see whether they are still alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.
Septuagint (Greek)	Moses returns to Egypt. Ex.4.18-31 And Moses went and returned to Jothor his father-in-law, and says, I will go and return to my brethren in Egypt, and will see if they are yet living. And Jothor said to Moses, Go in health. And in those days after some time, the king of Egypt died.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law, and said to him, Let me go back now to my relations in Egypt and see if they are still living. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.
Easy English	Moses returns to Egypt Then Moses went back to Jethro, his wife's father. Moses said to Jethro: 'Please let me return to my family in Egypt. I must see if they are still alive.' So Jethro said to Moses: 'Go in peace.' 'Go in peace' means that Jethro agreed with Moses. He thought that it was a good thing for Moses to see his family in Egypt.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Moses Leaves Midian Then Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law. Moses said to him, "Please let me go back to Egypt. I want to see if my people are still alive." Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Moses Returns to Egypt Then Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go back to my relatives in Egypt to see if they are still alive." Jethro agreed and told him good-bye.
International Children's B.	Moses Returns to Egypt Then Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law. Moses said to him, "Let me go back to my people in Egypt. I want to see if they are still alive." Jethro said to Moses, "You may go. Have a safe trip."
<i>The Message</i>	Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said, "I need to return to my relatives who are in Egypt. I want to see if they're still alive." Jethro said, "Go. And peace be with you."

NIRV

Moses Returns to Egypt

Then Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro. He said to him, "Let me return to my own people in Egypt. I want to see if any of them are still alive."
Jethro said, "Go. I hope everything goes well with you."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible

Moses goes back to Egypt

Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, "Please let me go back to my family in Egypt and see whether or not they are still living."
Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

Contemporary English V.

Moses went to his father-in-law Jethro and asked, "Please let me return to Egypt to see if any of my people are still alive." "All right," Jethro replied. "I hope all goes well."

The Living Bible

Moses returned home and talked it over with Jethro, his father-in-law. "With your permission," Moses said, "I will go back to Egypt and visit my relatives. I don't even know whether they are still alive."

"Go with my blessing," Jethro replied.

New Berkeley Version

New Life Version

Then Moses left and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "I ask of you, let me return to my brothers in Egypt to see if they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

New Living Translation

Moses Returns to Egypt

So Moses went back home to Jethro, his father-in-law. "Please let me return to my relatives in Egypt," Moses said. "I don't even know if they are still alive."
"Go in peace," Jethro replied.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible

Well thereafter, Moses returned to His Excellence (his father-in-law), and said: 'I'm going to visit my brother in Egypt, to see if he's still living.'
And His Excellence said to Moses: 'Go in health.'

Beck's American Translation

International Standard V

Moses Decides to Return to Egypt

Moses left and returned to his father-in-law Jethro. Moses [Lit. *he*] told him, "Please let me go and return to my own people [Lit. *my brothers*] in Egypt so I can see whether they're still alive."

New Advent (Knox) Bible

Then Moses made his way back to his father-in-law, Jethro; Give me leave, he said, to return to Egypt, and see whether my brethren there are still living. And Jethro said, Go in peace.

Translation for Translators

God's instructions to Moses after Moses returned to Egypt

Moses/I returned to his/my father-in-law Jethro and said to him, "Please let me go back to Egypt, to see my fellow Israelis there. I want to know if they are still alive."
Jethro said to Moses/me, "Go, and may *God give you inner peace.*"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible

Moses was to go and was to turn back to Jethro, his father-in-law, and was to say: I was to depart, and was to turn back to my brothers at Egypt, even was I to perceive, if they are still alive. Jethro was to say to Moses: Be proceeding in peace.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible

Moses therefore went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him ; " I wish to go now and rejoin my relatives who are in Mitzeraim and see if they are alive." When Jethro replied to Moses, "Go in peace."

God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law again and said unto him: let me go (I pray you) and turn again unto my brethren which are in Egypt, that I may see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses: go in peace.
HCSB	Moses' Return to Egypt Then Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, "Please let me return to my relatives in Egypt and see if they are still living." Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."
Lexham English Bible	Moses Leaves Midian and Returns to Egypt And Moses went, and he returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and he said to him, "Please let me go, and let me return to my brothers who [are] in Egypt, and let me see whether they [are] yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."
NIV, ©2011	Moses Returns to Egypt Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me return to my own people in Egypt to see if any of them are still alive." Jethro said, "Go, and I wish you well."
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Moses went and returned to Yether (Jethro) his father in law, and said to him "Please, I will go and return to my brothers in Egypt, and see if they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) The Heritage Bible	And Moses walked, and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said to him, Let me walk, please, and return to my brothers who are in Egypt, and see whether they are yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Walk in peace. We all understand the lack of faith Moses expressed when he argued with God in the previous verses about walking to Egypt to bring Israel out of Egypt, but after he has seen and attentively heard Jehovah God speak to him out of the burning bush, and he has agreed to go, he still expresses his unbelief to Jethro. He told Jethro that he wanted to walk to Egypt to see if his brothers were yet alive. If they were all dead, he certainly could not lead them out. Of course, he did not want to disclose to Jethro what God had commanded him to do, because he did not wish to appear to be a crazy man in the eyes of Jethro, but even in hiding from Jethro his real mission, he did not have to express his unbelief. He could have simply said, I need to walk to Egypt to see how my brothers are. He did not need the exaggeration about seeing if they were still living. So very often when we explain to others our actions, since we are sure they will not understand, we exaggerate, and put in our words of unbelief to make it more reasonable to them.
New American Bible (2002)	After this Moses returned to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, "Let me go back, please, to my kinsmen in Egypt, to see whether they are still living." Jethro replied, "Go in peace." Moses did not tell his father-in-law his main reason for returning to Egypt, but this secondary motive which he offered was also true.
New American Bible (2011)	After this Moses returned to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me return to my kindred in Egypt, to see whether they are still living." Jethro replied to Moses, "Go in peace." Jethro: the Hebrew text has "Jether," apparently a variant form of "Jethro" found in the same verse. To see whether they are still living: Moses did not tell his father-in-law his main reason for returning to Egypt.
New Jerusalem Bible	Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, 'Give me leave to return to my kinsmen in Egypt and see if they are still alive.' And Jethro said to Moses, 'Go in peace.'
Revised English Bible	Moses then went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said, "Let me return to Egypt and see whether my kinsfolk are still alive." Jethro said, "Go, and may you have a safe journey."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	(vi) Moshe left, returned to Yitro his father-in-law and said to him, "I beg you to let me go and return to my kinsmen in Egypt, to see if they are still alive." Yitro said to Moshe, "Go in peace."
exeGesés companion Bible	And Mosheh goes and returns to Yithro his in law, and says to him, Let me go, I beseech you, and return to my brothers in Misrayim and see whether they are still alive. And Yithro says to Mosheh, Go in shalom.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, "Let me go back to my kinsmen in Egypt and see how they are faring." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."
Kaplan Translation	<i>Moses Leaves Midian</i> Moses left and returned to his father-in-law Jethro. He said, 'I would like to leave and return to my people in Egypt, to see if they are still alive.' 'Go in peace,' said Jethro to Moses. Jether Yether in Hebrew, another form of Jethro (Exodus 3:1). Some say that the name was changed to Jethro when he became a believer (Rashi on Exodus 18:1). Here, we see that it was at this point, when he spoke to Moses, who had just returned from Sinai.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Moshe went and returned to Yitro his khoten (father-in-law), and said unto him, Let me go, now, and return unto my achim which are in Mitzrayim, and see whether they be yet alive. And Yitro said to Moshe, Lech l'shalom (go in peace).

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Moses Returns to Egypt Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law, and said to him, "Let me go back to my people [relatives; brothers; kindred] in Egypt. I want to see if they are still alive." Jethro said to Moses, "Go! I wish you well [Go in peace]."
Kretzmann's Commentary	Verses 18-26 Moses dismissed by Jethro And Moses went and returned to Jethro, his father-in-law, and said unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. The faithfulness, the sense of duty in Moses would not have permitted him to leave the flocks in the wilderness and to go to Egypt without leave-taking, even for a short while. He told Jethro as much of the truth as the latter needed to know at that time, for he would hardly have found a complete understanding of his object and of the divine revelation in the home of his relatives by marriage. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.
NET Bible®	<i>The Return of Moses</i> This last section of the chapter reports Moses' compliance with the commission. It has four parts: the decision to return (18-20), the instruction (21-23), the confrontation with Yahweh (24-26), and the presentation with Aaron (27-31). This last section of the chapter reports Moses' compliance with the commission. It has four parts: the decision to return (18-20), the instruction (21-23), the confrontation with Yahweh (24-26), and the presentation with Aaron (27-31). So Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, "Let me go, so that I may return to my relatives [Heb "brothers."] in Egypt and see if they are still alive." Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."
Syndein/Thieme	And Moses went and returned to Jethro, his father in law, and said unto him, "Let me go, I pray you/please, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see

whether they be yet alive." And Jethro said to Moses, 'Go in peace'. {idiom meaning he gave his approval for Moses to make the trip}.

The Voice

Barely convinced, Moses went back to his father-in-law, Jethro.

Moses (to Jethro): Please let me leave now, so that I can go back to my Hebrew brothers and sisters in Egypt and find out if they are still alive.

Jethro: You may go now with *my blessing and peace*.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and "Mosheh ^{Plucked outⁿ} walked and he turned back to "Yeter ^{Remainderⁿ}, his in-law, and he said to him, please, I will walk and I will turn back to my brothers (who) are in "Mits'rayim ^{Two straitsⁿ}, and I will see, are they (still) living? and "Yitro ^{His remainderⁿ} said to "Mosheh ^{Plucked outⁿ}, walk to completeness,...

Context Group Version

And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, Let me go, I beg of you, and return to my brothers that are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.

Emphasized Bible

So Moses went and returned unto Jethro his father-in-law and said to him—Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren who are in Egypt, that I my see whether they are yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses: Go and prosper.

Green's Literal Translation

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Modern English Version

Moses Returns to Egypt

Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brothers who are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive."

New European Version

Moses Leaves Midian

Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, Please let me go and return to my brothers who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive. Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.

New King James Version

Moses Goes to Egypt

So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive."

Niobi Study Bible

Moses Returns (Goes Back) to Egypt

And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said unto him, "Let me go, I pray you, and return unto my brethren who are in Egypt and see whether they are yet alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

Stuart Wolf

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Webster's Bible Translation

And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see whether they are yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.

Young's Updated LT

And Moses goes and turns back unto Jethro his father-in-law, and says to him, "Let me go, I pray you, and I turn back unto my brothers who are in Egypt, and I see whether they are yet alive." And Jethro says to Moses, "Go in peace."

The gist of this passage:

Moses asks his father-in-law Jethro for leave to return to Egypt, with the explanation, *to see if my relatives are still alive*. Jethro tells him to go in peace.

Exodus 4:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced <i>shoo^bv</i>]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
The NET Bible: <i>The two verbs form a verbal hendiadys, the second verb becoming adverbial in the translation: "and he went and he returned" becomes "and he went back."</i> ⁴⁵			
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Yith ^e rôw (יִתְרוֹ) [pronounced <i>yihth-ROW</i>]	<i>his abundance; his excellence and is transliterated Jethro, Jether</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3503 BDB #452
châthan (חַתָּן) [pronounced <i>khaw-THAHN</i>]	<i>wife's father, wife's mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law</i>	masculine singular, Qal active participle; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2859 BDB #368

Translation: So Moses went and he returned to Jethro, his father-in-law,...

God told Moses to go, after giving him a battle plan, and so Moses goes and returns to his father-in-law, Jethro.

There are two very common verbs here: *to go* and *to return*. We will find these two verbs paired up 4 times in the next few verses. This is the first time.

⁴⁵ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 16, 2017.

Exodus 4:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the cohortative hê	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

The cohortative expresses volition. In the English, we often render this with *let* or *may*; in the plural, this can be *let us*. The cohortative is designed for the 1st person, it can express a wish or a desire or purpose or an intent. It is found in conditional statements. Generally there is the hê suffix to indicate this. This might be called *apocopated* in Owen's *Analytical Keys to the Old Testament*.

nâ' (אנ) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
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Nâ' is used for a submissive and modest request. It is used to express a wish (Job 32:21: "Oh, that I may not respect any man's person"); to incite or to urge (Jer. 5:24); it is depreciatory when affixed to the 2nd person with a particle of negation (do not, I implore you—see Gen. 33:10 19:18); with the it expresses a wish or request (Psalm 124 129:1 SOS 7:9), a challenge (Jer. 17:15), asking leave (Gen. 18:4), and depreciation with a negation (Gen. 18:32). In many of these examples, we would express this with the addition of the word *let*.

Translation: ...and he said to him, "Let me go, please,..."

Moses has been working for his father-in-law for most of 40 years, and there has never been any indication that he might leave, but here, Moses requests permission to leave. He uses a respectful particle of entreaty.

Exodus 4:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Exodus 4:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the cohortative hê	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
The NET Bible: <i>There is a sequence here with the two cohortative forms: אָנֹכִי הֵבֵא שְׁבוּ (‘elk khah nna’ vk’ashuva) – “let me go in order that I may return.”</i> ⁴⁶			
’el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
’achîym (אֶחָיִם) [pronounced awhk-EEM]	<i>brothers, kinsmen, close relatives; tribesmen; fellow-countrymen</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Mits ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced mits-RAH-yim]	<i>double straights; transliterated Mizraim; also Egypt, Egyptians</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #4714 BDB #595

Translation: ...and let me return to my kinsmen who [are] in Egypt...

Moses has certainly given his father-in-law the whole picture, telling him what transpired and why he is on the run, and his relationship to his people, who are slaves in Egypt.

Remember those two verbs *go* and *return*? Here they are again, both paired up, and with the same morphology (1st person, Qal imperfect; with the cohortative hê).

Moses apparently does not tell his father-in-law about his meeting with God and his assignment from God. I would side with the Heritage Bible footnote, which suggests that Moses did not want to seem like a crazy person to his father-in-law. Perhaps Jethro, upon hearing that God spoke to Moses, would say, “Sounds like this is a mission which is dangerous, one that you ought to go alone. Why don’t you leave my daughters and your sons here.”

If you are not familiar with the Bible, you may think that the Bible is all about these characters who perform or witness miracle after miracle. That is not really the case. If you will recall, from Genesis, even though God’s hand is clearly visible in the life of Joseph, the most miraculous thing to occur in his life is, Pharaoh had a dream and Joseph correctly interpreted that dream. Joseph did not tell Pharaoh, “I will first interpret your dream and then make your throne turn into cheese.”

Now, it is 400 years later and we have been exposed to a small number of miracles in quick succession (the burning bush, the walking stick turning into a serpent, and Moses’ normal hand becoming leprous. It appears that

⁴⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 16, 2017.

Moses mentions none of this to his father-in-law, and instead opts to say, “Yeah, after all this time, I’d like to see if any of my family members are still alive.”

Exodus 4:18d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
râ’âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #7200 BDB #906
The NET Bible: <i>This verb is parallel to the preceding cohortative and so also expresses purpose: “let me go that I may return...and that I may see.”</i> ⁴⁷			
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong’s #none BDB #209
Hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>] usually an interrogative particle; but can act as indirect interrogation and be translated <i>if, whether [or not]</i> .			
’ôwd (וּדוּעַ) [pronounced <i>gohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong’s #5750 BDB #728
chay (חַי) [pronounced <i>KHAH-ee</i>]	<i>living, alive, active, lively, vigorous [used of man or animals]; green [vegetation]; fresh [used of a plant]; flowing [water]; reviving [of the springtime]; raw [flesh]</i>	masculine plural adjective	Strong’s #2416 BDB #311

Translation: ...and I will see if they [are] still alive.”

The final word is used here as an adjective, and it indicates that the treatment of the Jewish slaves was deplorable. Moses literally expected many of those that he talked to were dead by now. He has no idea how many Jewish people remain.

If you can imagine how HAMAS or ISIS might treat Jewish slaves, if they had them (assuming that they would keep them as slaves rather than simply kill them); this is very much how the Egyptians were treating the sons of Israel.

In order for the people of Israel to be willing to listen to Moses and to move off their duffs and go into the desert, in spite of Pharaoh, their lives had to be so miserable that they really had nothing to live for.

Sometimes, God has to beat us down so that we will listen to Him. I recall when I was saved that I was miserable in my life. In reality, my life was not all that bad, but I was 21, and a very immature 21, and I thought that my life absolutely sucked. Pretty much everything wrong with my life at that time was my own fault (although I was not

⁴⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 16, 2017.

self-aware enough to see that then). But, out of that misery, I believed in Jesus Christ. This is where the people of Israel must be. In order for them to look toward God, to trust in God, they have to be beat down to almost nothing.

Exodus 4:18a-d **So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, “Please let me go and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive.”**

Interestingly enough, Moses does not tell Jethro about seeing God in the desert-wilderness. Instead, he speaks of going to Egypt to see his brothers—his fellow sons of Israel—who are in slavery in Egypt.

The NKJV is generally an excellent updated translation. I have no idea why they use the anachronistic word *brethren*.

There was no doubt more to this conversation, but it is not recorded; and there is no indication that Moses told Jethro what really happened. Moses is not lying here; but he is simply withholding most of the information. He will be going to his brothers (= fellow Hebrews) in Egypt.

This is interesting choice by Moses, as his father-in-law Jethro, more than any other person, would have understood and believed Moses (that is conjecture on my part; but I think a logical conjecture). Perhaps Moses is ultimately keeping this information from his wife, who is not the most stable person in the world. Perhaps Moses is just completely astonished by the entire experience, and he is simply not sharing it unless absolutely necessary. At this point, Moses might not share any of these events with anyone, apart from his brother Aaron, and then, the elders of Israel.

In any case, father-in-law Jethro sends Moses on his way.

Exodus 4:18e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Yith ^e rôw (יִתְרוֹ) [pronounced <i>yihth-ROW</i>]	<i>his abundance; his excellence and is transliterated Jethro, Jether</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3503 BDB #452
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Exodus 4:18e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^o]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shâlôwm (שְׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced shaw-LOHM]	<i>completeness, soundness, health and welfare, peace, prosperity, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022

Translation: And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in [lit., to, for, regarding] peace.”

Jethro is an amazing man, with probably a close relationship with God. Moses had a better relationship with Jethro than he had with his own wife, Jethro's daughter.

Remember those two verbs, *go* and *return*? We would expect to find them here; we would expect Jethro to say, “Go and return to your people;” but he does not say that. He says, “Go in peace;” which therefore stands out. Where we would expect the word *return*, we find the word *peace* instead.

I've taken some liberties with the translation; Moses asks to return and see his *brothers*. Also, *I ask of you* is actually *I pray thee*. It is interesting to note that Moses says nothing of his encounter with the burning bush to his own father-in-law, who is a priest.

A guess on my part is that Moses will go half-heartedly to Egypt, first to see his family, and then he might go and speak to Pharaoh. He is still possibly going to play this by ear.

Notice that this parting is much better than the one between Laban and Jacob. Jethro recognizes the importance of Moses returning to Egypt to see his family and does not do anything untoward to make him stay. There is a mutual respect between Moses and Jethro, so Moses does not feel that he needs to hide what he is going to do.

Exodus 4:18b And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.”

Jethro has a great deal of respect for Moses, and he tells Moses to go in peace. In other words, “You have my permission.”

Exodus 4:18 So Moses went and he returned to Jethro, his father-in-law, and he said to him, “Let me go, please, and let me return to my kinsmen who [are] in Egypt and I will see if they [are] still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in [lit., to, for, regarding] peace.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Moses has lived in the deserts of Midian with Jethro and his family for the better part of 40 years. He has become an integral part of his family; and therefore, integral to the family business. Suddenly leaving like this will require Jethro to scramble, to make up for the loss of Moses. However, this is never presented as an issue by Jethro. We don't see him bringing it up; it is never discussed in the narrative.

In v. 18, Jethro gives Moses permission to leave; and suddenly in v. 19, God is speaking to Moses once again:

Exodus 4:18 Moses then went and returned to Jethro, his father-in-law, saying, “I must go, if you will allow me, to return to my kinsmen who remain in Egypt, to see if they are still alive.” And Jethro told Moses, “Go in peace.” (Kukis paraphrase)

And so says Y^ehowah unto Moses in Midian, “Go, return [to] Egypt, for are dead all the men the ones seeking your soul.”

Exodus
4:19

And Y^ehowah said to Moses in Midian, “Go back [lit., **Go, return**] [to] Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are [now] dead.”

And Jehovah said to Moses, while in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all of the men who sought your life are now dead.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Y ^e howah unto Moses in Midian, “Go, return [to] Egypt, for are dead all the men the ones seeking your soul.”
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum of Onkelos	And the Lord said to Mosheh in Midian, Go, return to Mizraim; for all the men who sought to kill thee are dead.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the Lord said unto Mosheh in Midian, Go, return to Mizraim; for they have come to nought, and gone down from their possessions; behold, all the men who sought to take thy life are reckoned as the dead.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And the Lord said to Moses, in Madian: Go, and return into Egypt: for they are all dead that sought thy life.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mar-Yah said to Mosha in Midian, "Go, and return into Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord said to Moses in Madiam, Go, depart into Egypt, for all that sought your life are dead.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And the Lord said to Moses in Midian, Go back to Egypt, for all the men are dead who were attempting to take your life.
Easy English	.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Then, while Moses was still in Midian, the LORD said to him, “It is safe for you to go back to Egypt now. The men who wanted to kill you are now dead.”
<i>The Message</i>	GOD said to Moses in Midian: “Go. Return to Egypt. All the men who wanted to kill you are dead.”
Names of God Bible	Now, Yahweh had said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, because all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.”

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	The LORD said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt because everyone there who wanted to kill you has died.”
Contemporary English V.	But even before this, the LORD had told Moses, "Leave the land of Midian and return to Egypt. Everyone who wanted to kill you is dead."
The Living Bible	Before Moses left Midian, Jehovah said to him, “Don’t be afraid to return to Egypt, for all those who wanted to kill you are dead.”
New Berkeley Version	.

New Century Version	While Moses was still in Midian, the LORD said to him, "Go back to Egypt, because the men who wanted to kill you are dead now."
New Living Translation	Before Moses left Midian, the LORD said to him, "Return to Egypt, for all those who wanted to kill you have died."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, after some time, the king of Egypt (possibly Seqenenre Tao II) died. 19 And the Lord said to Moses (while he was still in Midian): 'Now go... leave for Egypt, because those who wanted to kill you are dead.'
Beck's American Translation	.
International Standard V	.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	From Madian, then, the Lord bade Moses return to Egypt; all those who had threatened his life were dead.
Translation for Translators	Yahweh said to Moses/me <i>before he/I left</i> Midian, "You can <i>safely</i> return to Egypt, because the men who were wanting to kill you [MTY] are now dead."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Jehovah was to say to Moses in Midian: Be proceeding, be turning back to Egypt, for the men are to have died, they requiring your breath.
Conservapedia	The LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt, for all the men who wished to kill you have died." Amenemhet III, who had pronounced Moses' death warrant (see Chapter 2), had died.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	The EVER-LIVING afterwards said to Moses, in Midian ; "Go! Return to the Mitzeraim, for all the men are dead who sought your life."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And the Lord said unto Moses in Madian: return again into Egypt for they are dead which went about to kill you.
HCSB	Now in Midian the Lord told Moses, "Return to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead."
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Yahweh said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt. Because all the people asking for your life have died."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Yahweh said to Moses in the land of Midian, "Go back to Egypt for all those who wanted to kill you are dead."
The Heritage Bible	And Jehovah said to Moses in Midian, Walk, return to Egypt, because all the men are dead who sought your life.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	ADONAI said to Moshe in Midyan, "Go on back to Egypt, because all the men who wanted to kill you are dead."
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yah Veh says to Mosheh in Midyan, Go, return into Misrayim: for all the men who sought your soul have died.
Kaplan Translation	While Moses was still in Midian, God said to him, 'Go return to Egypt. All the men who seek your life have died.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Hashem said unto Moshe in Midyan, Go, shuv (return) into Mitsrayim; for all the anashim are dead which sought thy life.
The Scriptures 1998	And הויה said to Mosheh in Midyan, "Go, return to Mitsrayim, for all the men are dead who sought your life."

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible	Then the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life [for killing the Egyptian] are dead."
The Expanded Bible	While Moses was still in Midian, the LORD said to him, "Go back to Egypt, because the men who wanted to kill you [-were seeking your life] are dead now."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, for Moses apparently delayed his journey even now, Go, return into Egypt; for all the men are dead which sought thy life. This disclosure was intended to reassure Moses, to take away the last shred of his hesitation, although his mind had been made up even before.
NET Bible®	The Lord said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, because all the men who were seeking your life are dead."
The Voice	The Eternal spoke to Moses while he was still in Midian. Eternal One: Go back to Egypt. I assure you, all the men who wanted to kill you are no longer alive.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and "YHWH ^{He Is} said to "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} in "Mid'yan ^{Quarrel} , walk, turn back unto "Mits'rayim ^{Two straits} , given that all the men died, the ones searching out your being,...
Concordant Literal Version	Then Yahweh said to Moses in Midian: Go! Return to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your soul have died.
English Standard Version	And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead."
Green's Literal Translation	.
Stuart Wolf	.
Young's Updated LT	And Jehovah says unto Moses in Midian, "Go, turn back to Egypt, for all the men have died who seek your life."

The gist of this passage: God tells Moses to return to Egypt, for all those seeking his life have died.

Exodus 4:19a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Exodus 4:19a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Mid ^e yân (מִדְיָן) [pronounced <i>mihd-YAWN</i>]	<i>strife; transliterated Midian, Midjan</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #4080 BDB #193
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced <i>shoo^bv</i>]	<i>return, turn, turn back, reminisce, restore something, bring back something, revive, recover something, make restitution</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
Mits ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced <i>mits-RAH-yim</i>]	<i>double straights; transliterated Mizraim; also Egypt, Egyptians</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #4714 BDB #595

Translation: And Y^ehowah said to Moses in Midian, “Go back [lit., Go, return] [to] Egypt,...

It is unclear whether God is speaking to Moses a second time, or whether this is a summary of what God said to Moses. Most of the time in narrative, when we have the wâw consecutive followed by an imperfect verb, we are continuing with that same narrative. So, my first inclination would be that, God came to Moses again and said, “Time to go.”

Although an imperfect tense can be used for a past event, in such a case, continuous action is generally indicated. Instead, God appears to be establishing a more continuous and immediate relationship with Moses. When it comes to the children of Israel, the miracles that they will see are pretty much discreet events (although they do occur over a relatively short period of time—40 years). However, at the same time, God was actually miraculously preserving their clothing and sandals—illustrating logistical grace.

God appears to be establishing a continuing relationship with Moses. So, we would not understand this to mean, *and Y^ehowah had said to Moses*; but *and then Y^ehowah said to Moses*, instead. Up until the burning bush, Moses had no direct contact with God, insofar as God speaking to him. However, from this point forward, God is going to speak to Moses quite often. Whereas, for most of the patriarchs, their interactions with God can be easily classified into discreet interactions in time, the same will not be true of Moses. It will be very difficult to distinguish all of his interactions with God.

Nothing is said about how God speaks to Moses. We don't know if Moses dreamed this or if, God spoke to Moses in the clear daytime, separating him out from all that was taking place.

Now, if we understand this to mean, *and then Y^ehowah said to Moses* (which is exactly what the text says), then we must also recognize that, Moses was probably dragging his feet to some degree. Even if we understood this to mean continuous action in the past, then God has spoken to Moses on many occasions, telling him, “Moses, time to go; Moses, time to move out; Moses, let’s go!”

Since we have the repetition of *go...return*; that suggests that Moses needed some prodding to move him along.

Exodus 4:19b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
mûwth (תומ) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
kôl (לכ) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
’ânâshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-sheem</i>]; also spelled ’iyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
bâqash (שָׁקַח) [pronounced <i>baw-KAHSH</i>]	<i>the ones seeking, those who are searching; the ones who desire, those attempting to get, the ones demanding (requiring, striving after, asking, seeking with desire and diligence)</i>	masculine plural Piel participle with the definite article	Strong's #1245 BDB #134
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i>]	<i>soul, life, living being; breath; mind; desire, volition; will</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

Translation: ...for all the men who were seeking your life are [now] dead.”

God gives Moses some assurances about what he faced when he returned. Moses killed an Egyptian in Egypt, and Pharaoh sought Moses’ life. It is very likely that this Pharaoh saw Moses as a threat to the throne, and this was his ideal way of removing that threat. However, as we know, Moses fled to Midian.

This reassurance combined with God telling Moses, “Go, return to Egypt;” suggests that Moses was dragging his feet.

How God spoke to Moses this second time, we do not know. This could have been a reference to Mount Horeb because that is in Midian, near the border of Midian and Egypt. If God did come to Moses a second time, then

we are given no specifics whether He came in a dream or a vision or as another phenomenon of nature. Moses originally left Egypt because his life was in danger and now he can return since the statute of limitations has run out (which, in this case, is the fact that those who remembered the crime and intended to prosecute Moses had died).

Exodus 4:19 **And Y^ehowah said to Moses in Midian, "Go back [lit., Go, return] [to] Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are [now] dead."** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

We do not know if this is an additional conversation which God had with Moses or a part of their earlier meeting (which is what I think is the case). What I think is happening is, Moses is reflecting upon what God has already said to him. He is thinking about it as he continues his trek towards Egypt.

Now, 40 years previous, Moses had killed an Egyptian taskmaster for beating on a Hebrew slave. Moses thought that no one saw him do this, but many saw him and a warrant was issued⁴⁸ for his immediate arrest.

It appears that the statute of limitations for any crime is the death of the pharaoh issuing the arrest warrant. Since that particular pharaoh has died, and Moses is now legally off the hook.

Exodus 4:19 **Now the Lord said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead."** (Kukis paraphrase)

And so takes Moses his woman and his sons and so he causes them to ride upon the ass and so he returns land-ward, Egypt. And so takes Moses the staff of the Elohim in his hand.

Exodus
4:20

So Moses took his wife and his sons, and he placed them upon a donkey and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of Elohim in his hand.

So Moses took his wife and his sons and placed them upon a donkey and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so takes Moses his woman and his sons and so he causes them to ride upon the ass and so he returns land-ward, Egypt. And so takes Moses the staff of the Elohim in his hand.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum of Onkelos	And Mosheh took his wife and his sons, and made them ride upon the ass, and returned to the land of Mizraim. And Mosheh took the staff with which the miracles had been done before the Lord in his hand.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Mosheh took his wife and his sons, and made them ride on the ass, and returned to the land of Mizraim. And Mosheh took the rod which he had brought away from the chamber of his father-in-law; and it was from the sapphire Throne of glory, in weight forty sein; and upon it was engraven and set forth the Great and Glorious Name by which the signs should be wrought before the Lord by his hand.
Revised Douay-Rheims	Moses therefore took his wife, and his sons, and set them upon an ass: and returned into Egypt, carrying the rod of God in his hand.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mosha took his wife and his sons, and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. Mosha took God's rod in his hand.

⁴⁸ Whatever they did in ancient Egypt when a man was to be arrested.

Peshitta (Syriac)	And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and started on his way back to Egypt; and he took the staff of God in his hand.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Moses took his wife and his children, and mounted them on the beasts, and returned to Egypt; and Moses took the rod which he had from God in his hand.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Easy English	.
Easy-to-Read Version—2006	So Moses put his wife and children on the donkey and returned to Egypt. He carried his walking stick with him—the walking stick with the power of God.
<i>The Message</i>	So Moses took his wife and sons and put them on a donkey for the return trip to Egypt. He had a firm grip on the staff of God.
Names of God Bible	So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey, and started out for Egypt. He also brought with him the staff Elohim had told him to take.
NIRV	So Moses got his wife and sons. He put them on a donkey. Together they started back to Egypt. And he took the walking stick in his hand. It was the stick God would use in a powerful way.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	So Moses put his wife and sons on donkeys and headed for Egypt, holding the walking stick that had the power of God.
The Living Bible	So Moses took his wife and sons and put them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt, holding tightly to the “rod of God”!
New Berkeley Version	.
New Life Version	So Moses took his wife and sons and put them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the special stick of God in his hand.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So Moses took his wife and children, mounted them on his animals, and returned to Egypt. Moses also carried along his walking stick [through which he had received power] from God.
Beck’s American Translation	.
International Standard V	So Moses took his wife and son, put them on donkeys, and headed back to the land of Egypt. Moses took the staff of God in his hand.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	So Moses took his wife and children, with his ass to carry them, and returned to Egypt, with the staff, divinely appointed, in his hand.
Translation for Translators	So Moses/I took his/my wife and sons and put them on donkeys, and they/we returned to Egypt. And Moses/I took in his/my hand the stick that God <i>told him/me to take along</i> .

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Moses was to take his wife and his son, and was to make them to ride on asses; even was he to turn back to the solid grounds of Egypt. Moses was to take the staff, of he mighty, in his hand.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Then Moses took his wife, and his sons, and mounted them upon asses and turned towards the land of the Mitzeraim. Moses also took the Rod of God in his hand.
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	And Moses took his wife and his sons and put them on an ass, and went again to Egypt, and took the rod of God in his hand.

Lexham English Bible	And Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on the donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt, and Moses took the staff of God in his hand.
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Moses took his woman and his sons, and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt, and Moses took the staff of Elohim in his hand.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Moses took with him his wife and his sons. He put them on a donkey and set off for Egypt, holding in his hand the staff of God.
New American Bible (2002)	So Moses took his wife and his sons, and started back to the land of Egypt, with them riding the ass. The staff of God he carried with him.
New Jerusalem Bible	So Moses took his wife and his son and, putting them on a donkey, started back for Egypt; and Moses took the staff of God in his hand.
Revised English Bible	Moses took his wife and children, mounted them on a donkey, and set out for Egypt with the staff of God in his hand.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	And Mosheh takes his woman and his sons and rides them on a he burro and he returns to the land of Misrayim: and Mosheh takes the rod of Elohim in his hand.
Kaplan Translation	Moses took his wife and sons and, putting them on a donkey, set out to return to Egypt. He also took the divine staff in his hand. her son's Some say that it was her newborn son Eliezer (Sh'moth Rabbah, Rashi; Ibn Ezra). According to others, it was the older son, Gershom, who was not yet circumcised (Targum Yonathan; Sefer HaYashar).
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Moshe took his isha and his banim, and set them upon a donkey, and he returned to Eretz Mitzrayim; and matteh HaElohim in his yad.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So Moses took his wife [Zipporah] and his sons [Gershom and Eliezer] and seated them on donkeys, and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand.
The Expanded Bible	So Moses took his wife and his sons, put them on a donkey, and started back to Egypt. He took ·with him [^L in his hand] the ·walking stick [staff] of God.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Moses took his wife and his sons, Gershom and Eliezer, Exodus 18:4, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt, he started out on his trip to the country of his birth, and Moses took the rod of God in his hand, for so he regarded the staff with which he was to perform miracles.
NET Bible®	Then Moses took [<i>Heb</i> "And Moses took."] his wife and sons ⁶¹ and put them on a donkey and headed back ⁶² to the land of Egypt, and Moses took the staff of God in his hand.
The Voice	Moses placed his wife and sons on a donkey, and he started on the <i>long</i> journey back to Egypt. <i>As he walked</i> , he carried God's staff— <i>his shepherd's staff</i> —with him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} took his woman and his sons, and he made them ride upon the donkey, and he turned back unto the land of "Mits'rayim ^{Two straits} ", and "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} took the branch of the "Elohiym ^{Powers} in his hand,...
Concordant Literal Version	So Moses took his wife and his sons and let them ride on the donkey and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the rod of the One, Elohim, in his hand.

English Standard Version	So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.
Green's Literal Translation NASB	. 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.
Stuart Wolf	.
Young's Updated LT	And Moses takes his wife, and his sons, and causes them to ride on the ass, and turns back to the land of Egypt, and Moses takes the rod of God in his hand.

The gist of this passage: Moses takes his wife and sons, puts them on a donkey, and heads back to the land of Egypt, carrying the walking staff.

Exodus 4:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bânîym (בָּנָיִם) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men; young men, youths</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

The NET Bible: *Only Gershom has been mentioned so far. The other son's name will be explained in chapter 18. The explanation of Gershom's name was important to Moses' sojourn in Midian. The explanation of the name Eliezer fits better in the later chapter (18:2-4).*⁴⁹

Translation: So Moses took his wife and his sons,...

Moses now obeys God. He gets his wife, his children together for the trip.

⁴⁹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 17, 2017.

Recall, that his wife has lived here in Midian with her father all of her life. She probably expected to die there, and this would be quite an uprooting. She probably has never been to Egypt before. She may have never traveled more than 10 miles away from her home before.

Exodus 4:20b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râkab (בָּכַר) [pronounced <i>raw-KAH^{BV}</i>]	<i>to cause to ride, to cause to [mount and] ride, to cause to draw, pull along; to cause to ride upon; to place in a chariot [cart]; to fasten to [an animal]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #7392 BDB #938
‘al (לַעַ) [pronounced <i>‘ah]</i>	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
chāmôwr (רֹמַחַ) [pronounced <i>khuh-MOHR</i>]	<i>ass, male donkey, he-ass, burrow</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2543 BDB #331

Translation: ...and he placed them upon a donkey...

Interestingly enough, even after 40 years, Moses does not appear to have a great many possessions. Or, perhaps his sons are quite young. But we do not place the wife and the children on various donkeys; just upon one.

Exodus 4:20a-b **Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey...**

God does not suggest that Moses leave his family behind. However, we will soon find out that one son is not circumcised, which is unacceptable. We will determine that this reveals a lack of leadership on Moses part.

Exodus 4:20c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced <i>shoo^{bv}</i>]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996

The NET Bible: *The verb would literally be rendered “and returned”; however, the narrative will record other happenings before he arrived in Egypt, so an ingressive nuance fits here – he began to return, or started back.*⁵⁰

⁵⁰ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 17, 2017.

Exodus 4:20c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earthward (all or a portion thereof), on [toward, upon] the earth [ground]; on [upon, toward] the land [territory, country, continent; ground, soil]</i>	feminine singular noun with the directional hê	Strong's #776 BDB #75
Mits ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced mits-RAH-yim]	<i>double straights; transliterated Mizraim; also Egypt, Egyptians</i>	masculine singular, proper noun; pausal form	Strong's #4714 BDB #595

Translation: ...and returned to the land of Egypt.

The verb here is in the masculine singular because Moses is the one who is returning to Egypt.

Exodus 4:20a-c **Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The way that this is translated, it sounds as if Moses has returned to Egypt; and then the rest of this narrative takes place. I think that it is better to understand that *Moses has **begun his trip** to return to the land of Egypt.*

The verb translated *to return* is an imperfect verb, which can denote a process rather than a completed act (the perfect tense often indicates a completed act). So, we may legitimately understand Moses to be *in the process of returning to Egypt*. The Voice is one of the few translations which recognizes that v. 20a-b does not place Moses in Egypt; but on the way to Egypt: **Moses placed his wife and sons on a donkey, and he started on the long journey back to Egypt.** The Expanded Bible takes the same approach: **So Moses took his wife and his sons, put them on a donkey, and started back to Egypt.** However, most translations incorrectly read *returned to Egypt*. That would have been the way to translate a perfect tense.⁵¹

The reason that the imperfect tense is important is, the incidents which occur in vv. 20–28 all occur in Median; at v. 29, Moses is actually in Egypt.

Moses has said goodbye to his father-in-law and has placed his wife and sons on a donkey to return to Egypt. The wife has likely never been outside of Midian.

Exodus 4:20a-c **Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

As we have previously discussed, *returned* is an imperfect verb, referring to a process rather than to an achieved result. This is better translated *and he began to return to Egypt*. He will not actually be in Egypt until v. 29.

⁵¹ It is not always easy to give the sense of the imperfect or perfect verb tense in the English translation from the Hebrew. However, it is important to the context here to recognize that Moses is simply on his way; he is not there yet.

Exodus 4:20d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
maṭṭeh (מַטֵּה) [pronounced <i>maht-TEH</i>]	<i>staff, branch, scepter, rod; branch; tribe</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4294 BDB #641
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

Translation: Moses also took the staff of Elohim in his hand.

As instructed, Moses is carrying the staff of God, so called because he would use it to show signs from God.

This staff was the staff which Moses had used for years to walk with and to herd his cattle and sheep with. However, when God caused it to change into a serpent and back into a staff, it became the staff of God.

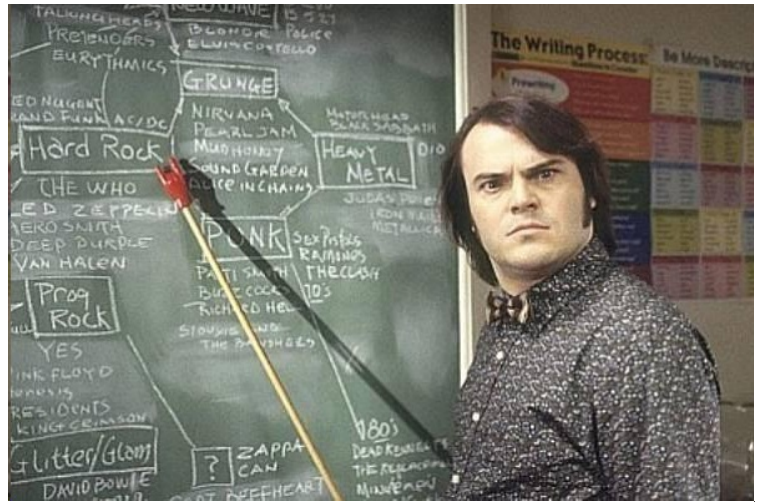
I think that we are to understand this as, *Moses traveled with God's power*; this is what the staff now represents.

I read some discussion that Moses had his own staff, but that this was a new staff give him by God. I don't think that is the case and do not find any evidence of this in the text. Furthermore, does God need a particular staff in order to amaze Pharaoh and his underlings?

Exodus 4:20d *And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Now the rod or staff that Moses has been carrying is called *the rod [staff] of God*. God will use this staff in Moses' hand. It is not essential to lend power of any sort to the acts of God; Moses will simply use the staff in order to point to the place where God will act. His staff will be used much like a magician uses a magic wand; or as a teacher uses a pointer (both of those may be dated references for younger readers).

Jack Black using a pointer in the movie “School of Rock”; from [Movie Details](#); accessed November 27, 2018. Most pointers have a point on the end; Black’s pointer has tiny *Hook ‘em horns* hand at the end of it.



Magician’s Hat and Wand (graphic); from [123RF](#); accessed November 27, 2018. At one time, the top hat and wand were standard issue to young magicians. The wand is that thing that looks like a pencil next to the hat.

Exodus 4:20 So Moses took his wife and his sons, and he placed them upon a donkey and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of Elohim in his hand. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:20 So Moses took his wife and his sons and placed them upon a donkey and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand. (Kukis paraphrase)

And so says Y^ehowah unto Moses, “In your going to return [to] Egypt, see all the wonders that I have put into your hand and you have done them to faces of Pharaoh. And I, [even] I, will strengthen his heart and he will not send the people away.

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Y^ehowah said to Moses, “When you go to return [to] Egypt, observe [and take note] of all the miracles I have placed into your hand—you will do them before Pharaoh. However, I, [even] I, will strengthen his heart so that he will not send the people away.

Jehovah said to Moses, “When you return to Egypt, remember all of the power that I have placed into your hand—you will do great miracles before the Pharaoh there. However, I will strengthen Pharaoh’s heart, so that he will choose not to send the people away.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so says Y^ehowah unto Moses, “In your going to return [to] Egypt, see all the wonders that I have put into your hand and you have done them to faces of Pharaoh. And I, [even] I, will strengthen his heart and he will not send the people away.

Dead Sea Scrolls
Targum of Onkelos

And the Lord said to Mosheh, In thy going to return to Mizraim look to all the wonders that I have appointed by thy hand, and do them before the Pharaoh. But I will obdurate his heart, and he will not send the people away.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the Lord said to Mosheh, In going to return into Mizraim, consider all the miracles that I have put in thy hand, and do them before Pharaoh: and I will make obstinate the disposition (passion) of his heart, and he will not deliver the people.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And the Lord said to him as he was returning into Egypt: See that thou do all the wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thy hand: I shall harden his heart, and he will not let the people go.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mar-Yah said to Moshah, "When you go back into Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your hand, but I will harden his heart and he will not let the people go.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the LORD said to Moses. When you return to Egypt, see that you perform all the wonders before Pharaoh which I have performed by your hand, but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord said to Moses, When you go and return to Egypt, see-- all the miracles I have charged you with, you shall work before Pharaoh: and I will harden his heart, and he shall certainly not send away the people.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Easy English	Then the Lord said to Moses: 'When you return to Egypt you must do the signs. Do all the signs that I gave you the power to do. Do them in front of Pharaoh. But I will make Pharaoh angry and cruel. Because of this, he will not let the people go.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	While Moses was traveling back to Egypt, the LORD spoke to him, "When you talk to Pharaoh remember to show him all the miracles that I have given you the power to do. But I will cause Pharaoh to be very stubborn. He will not let the people go.
Names of God Bible	Yahweh said to Moses, "When you get back to Egypt, see that you show Pharaoh all the amazing things that I have given you the power to do. But I will make him stubborn so that he will not let the people go.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	The LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, make sure that you appear before Pharaoh and do all the amazing acts that I've given you the power to do. But I'll make him stubborn so that he won't let the people go.
Contemporary English V.	On the way the LORD said to Moses: When you get to Egypt, go to the king and work the miracles I have shown you. But I will make him so stubborn that he will refuse to let my people go.
The Living Bible	.
New Berkeley Version	.
New Century Version	The LORD said to Moses, "When you get back to Egypt, do all the miracles I have given you the power to do. Show them to the king of Egypt. But I will make the king very stubborn, and he will not let the people go.
New Living Translation	And the LORD told Moses, "When you arrive back in Egypt, go to Pharaoh and perform all the miracles I have empowered you to do. But I will harden his heart so he will refuse to let the people go.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And the Lord said to Moses: 'When you return to Egypt, consider at all the miracles that I've given you, then you must perform these things before Pharaoh. However, I will make him hard-hearted and he will still refuse to send the people away.
Beck's American Translation	.

International Standard V	Then the LORD told Moses, "When you set out to return to Egypt, keep in mind [Lit. <i>see, watch</i>] all the wonders that I've put in your power [Lit. <i>hand</i>], so that you may do them before Pharaoh. But I'll harden his heart so that he won't let the people go.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And as he went back to Egypt, the Lord said to him, Thy part is to do all the wonders I put it in thy power to do, in Pharaoh's presence. But I mean to harden his heart, so that he refuses to let my people go;...
Translation for Translators	Yahweh said to Moses/me, "When you return to Egypt, be sure to perform all the miracles that I have given you power <i>to do</i> , while the king is watching. But I will make him stubborn [IDI], with the result that he will not let the Israeli people leave <i>Egypt</i> .

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Jehovah was to say to Moses: You is to go, and are to turn back to Egypt, be perceiving that you is to have effected the magnificent things, turned before of Pharaoh, that I am to have set in your hand. Yet, he was to hold strong the sensibility of his heart - even was he to let loose My people?
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	The LIVING ONE also said further to Moses; " During your journey to the Mitzeraim, regard all the signs which I put unto your hand, and do them before Pharaoh. But I shall harden his heart, and he will not let the People go.
HCSB	The LORD instructed Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, make sure you do all the wonders before Pharaoh that I have put within your power. But I will harden his heart so that he won't let the people go.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Yahweh said to Moses, "In your walking to return to Egypt, see all the wonders that I have put in your hands, and do them before Pharaoh, and I will harden his heart, and he will not send the people off."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Yahweh said to Moses, "You are returning to Egypt and you will perform all the miraculous signs that I have empowered you to do, in the presence of Pharaoh. I will, however, make him stubborn so that he will not let the people go.
The Heritage Bible	And Jehovah said to Moses, When you walk returning into Egypt, see that you do all these miracles which I have put in your hand before the face of Pharaoh; and I will seize his heart, and he will not send the people out.
New American Bible (2002)	The LORD said to him, "On your return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have put in your power. I will make him obstinate, however, so that he will not let the people go. Make him obstinate: literally, "harden his heart." God permitted Pharaoh to be stubborn in his opposition to the departure of the Israelites. Cf ⇒ Romans 9:17, ⇒ 18.
New American Bible (2011)	The LORD said to Moses: On your return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart* and he will not let the people go.

Harden his heart: in the biblical view, the heart, whose actual function in the circulation of blood was unknown, typically performs functions associated today more with the brain than with the emotions. Therefore, while it may be used in connection with various emotional states ranging from joy to sadness, it very commonly designates the seat of intellectual and volitional activities. For God to harden Pharaoh's heart is to harden his resolve against the Israelites' desire to leave. In the ancient world, actions which are out of character are routinely attributed not to the person but to some "outside" superhuman power acting upon the person (Jgs 14:16; 1 Sm 16:10). Uncharacteristically negative actions or states are explained in the same way (1 Sm 16:14). In this instance, the opposition of Pharaoh, in the face of God's displays of power, would be unintelligible to the

ancient Israelites unless he is seen as under some divine constraint. But this does not diminish Pharaoh's own responsibility. In the anthropology of the ancient Israelites there is no opposition between individual responsibility and God's sovereignty over all of creation. Cf. Rom 9:17–18.

New Jerusalem Bible	Yahweh said to Moses, 'Think of the wonders I have given you power to perform, once you are back in Egypt! You are to perform them before Pharaoh, but I myself shall make him obstinate, and he will not let the people go.
Revised English Bible	The LORD said to Moses, "While you are on your way back to Egypt, keep in mind all the portents I have given you power to show. You are to display these before Pharaoh, but I shall make him obstinate and he will not let the people go.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Adonai said to Moshe, "When you get back to Egypt, make sure that you do before Pharaoh every one of the wonders I have enabled you to do. Nevertheless, I am going to make him hardhearted, and he will refuse to let the people go.
exeGesés companion Bible	And Yah Veh says to Mosheh, When you go to return into Misrayim, see that you work all those omens I put in your hand at the face of Paroh: but I callous his heart that he not send the people away.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	And the Lord said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the marvels that I have put within your power. I, however, will stiffen his heart so that he will not let the people go.
Kaplan Translation	God said to Moses, 'On your way back to Egypt, keep in mind all the wondrous powers that I have placed in your hand. You will use them before Pharaoh. But I will make him obstinate [Literally, 'harden his heart.'], and he will not allow the people to leave.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Hashem said unto Moshe, When thou goest to return into Mitzrayim, see that thou do all those mofetim before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine yad: but I will harden his lev, that he shall not let HaAm go.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	The Lord said to Moses, "When you get back to Egypt, do all the miracles I have given you the power to do [¹ set in our hand]. Show them to the king of Egypt [¹ Pharaoh]. But I will make the king very stubborn [¹ harden his heart], and he will not let the people go.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand. The first commission was here repeated and explained, in order to impress every detail upon Moses' mind. After his return to Egypt he was to perform all the wonders, all the terrible signs, which the Lord had placed in his hand to do. There would be need of great firmness and courage in dealing with Pharaoh. But I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go. In His omniscience the Lord here anticipates. He knew that Pharaoh would harden his heart willfully and maliciously, would refuse to heed the successive appeals that would be made, and therefore God announces the final judgment upon the Egyptian king, the condemnation which would make it impossible for him to be converted in the end.
NET Bible®	The Lord said [<i>Heb</i> "And Yahweh said."] to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, ⁶⁴ see that you ⁶⁵ do before Pharaoh all the wonders I have put under your control [Or "in your power"; <i>Heb</i> "in your hand."]. But I will harden [<i>Heb</i> "strengthen" (in the

sense of making stubborn or obstinate).] his heart⁶⁸ and [Or “so that.”] he will not let the people go.

Syndein/Thieme And Jehovah/God said unto Moses, "When you go to return into Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in your hand. But I will keep on intensively support his heart/'right lobe' . . . that he shall not let the people go." {Note: The Pharaoh has had every opportunity in the world to believe in God. But, he has said no, no, no so many times, that the scar tissue on his soul had now made it impossible for him to change his mind. He should die the sin unto death, but God is keeping him alive, with his negative volition to God and His people here, alive as an example to the rest of the world. God is NOT coercing the Pharaoh's own volition here.}

The Voice **Eternal One:** When you arrive in Egypt, I want you to pay Pharaoh a visit. Make sure you perform all the wonders that I have entrusted to your hand. But I am going to harden Pharaoh's stony heart, so that he will not free the people.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans. ...and "YHWH ^{He Is}" said to "Mosheh ^{Plucked out}", in your walking to turn back unto "Mits'rayim ^{Two straits}", see all the wonders which I placed in your hand, and you will do them <in front of> "Paroh ^{Great house}", and I will seize his heart and he will not send the people,...

Concordant Literal Version And Yahweh said to Moses: When you go to return to Egypt, see to all the miracles which I place in your hand, that you do them before Pharaoh. Yet I shall make his heart steadfast, and he shall not dismiss the people.

English Standard Version And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.

Green's Literal Translation And Jehovah said to Moses, As you go to return to Egypt, see all the wonders which I have put in your hand, and do them before Pharaoh. And I will make strong his heart, and he will not send the people away.

NASB 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.

Stuart Wolf .

Webster's Bible Translation And the LORD said to Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou perform all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thy hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.

Young's Updated LT And Jehovah says unto Moses, "In your going to turn back to Egypt, see—all the wonders which I have put in your hand—that you have done them before Pharaoh, and I—I strengthen his heart, and he does not send the people away.

The gist of this passage: God tells Moses that he must make use of the powers that He has given to Moses; and warns that He will give strength to Pharaoh, and that he would refuse Moses' request.

Exodus 4:21a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Exodus 4:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
hālak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
The infinitive construct, when combined with the bēyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered <i>when [such and such happens]</i> . It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.			
lāmed (לְ) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shūwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7725 BDB #996

The lāmed with an infinitive construct generally expresses purpose or result, although it can have three other common uses with the infinitive: (1) It can have a gerundial or adverbial sense to explain the circumstances of a previous action; (2) it can act as a periphrastic future in nominal clauses; and, (3) it can behave as a gerund, in the sense of *is to be, must be, ought to be*.⁵² (4) Lāmed with the infinitive can connote *shall* or *must*.⁵³

The NET Bible: *The construction may involve a verbal hendiadys using the two infinitive forms: “when you go to return” (בוּ שׁוּב לְהָשִׁיב, bəlekhtk kha lashuv). The clause is temporal, subordinated to the instruction to do the signs. Therefore, its focus cannot be on going to return, i.e., preparing or beginning to return.*⁵⁴

⁵² the bulk of this was paraphrased from J.C.L. Gibson, *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar-Syntax*; 4th Edition, © T&T Clark Ltd., 1994, pp. 127–132 and from *Biblical Hebrew*; by Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, p. 434.

⁵³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 438.

⁵⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 17, 2017.

Exodus 4:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Mits ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced <i>mits-RAH-yim</i>]	<i>double straights</i> ; transliterated <i>Mizraim</i> ; also <i>Egypt, Egyptians</i>	masculine singular, proper noun with the directional hê	Strong's #4714 BDB #595

The directional hê (properly, the directive hê) is the *âh* (ה) ending to a noun, usually found after a verb of motion. This is called the *directive hê* or the *hê locale*, which often indicates direction and puts somewhat of an adverbial spin on the noun. Essentially, it answers the question *where?* The pronunciation of the word does not change. The directional hê indicates the direction in which something moves. It is often used with the noun *heaven* and the most literal rendering in the English would be *heavenward*. We can also indicate the existence of the hê directional by supplying the prepositions *to* or *toward*.

Translation: Y^ehowah said to Moses, “When you go to return [to] Egypt,...

One more time, we find the verbs *go* and *return* placed together; this time as infinitive constructs. Moses is on his feet, he has his family saddled up, and they are moving toward Egypt.

Exodus 4:21a [And the Lord said to Moses,...](#)

The narrative could be understood to be like this: Moses is leading his wife and two sons on their donkeys, traveling to Egypt; and Moses considers what he is doing. He becomes cognizant of the staff in his hand, and then he thinks about what God said to him.

There are basically two ways of understanding this passage: (1) Every few minutes, as Moses rides along (I am assuming that he is riding a donkey as well), God speaks to him and Moses thinks about that. Or (2) Moses, on this long trip, thinks about the things that God said to him. I have interpreted this narrative in the second way, which I believe is a correct assessment of the situation.

We know very little about his wife; but what we do know about her is not good. It would make perfect sense for Moses to concentrate on what God has said to him, as opposed to what his wife wants to say about everything that is going on. If she is giving her opinions on the matter of traveling from Midian to Egypt, Moses may take that time to think about what God has said to him.

Exodus 4:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>]	<i>look, see, watch; behold, view, see here, listen up; observe</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
môwphêth (מוֹפְתִים) [pronounced <i>moe-FAITH</i>]	<i>a wonder, sign, miracle; a proof [of divine involvement] a sign [of a future event]</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4159 BDB #68
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Exodus 4:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sîym (שִׂיַם) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sūwm (שׁוּם) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The two verb forms in this section are the imperative (רָאָה, rā'eh) followed by the perfect with the vav (וַיַּשִּׁימ, va'asitam). The second could be coordinated and function as a second command: "see...and [then] do"; or it could be subordinated logically: "see...so that you do." Some commentators who take the first option suggest that Moses was supposed to contemplate these wonders before doing them before Pharaoh. That does not seem as likely as the second interpretation reflected in the translation.⁵⁵</i></p>			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

Translation: ...observe [and take note] of all the miracles I have placed into your hand...

Moses is carrying the staff, and God is going to give Moses great power with this staff—much greater than Moses knows right now.

This is, to some extent, a security blanket. God is allowing Moses to carry this staff, which he will carry and use for the rest of his life; and God will exercise great power through that staff.

As an aside, we are believers with free will, and we often do a lot of dumb stuff. God can use us and it is a privilege when God uses us. Bear in mind, God can take a rock or a staff and miraculously use these items to do amazingly great things. However, God allows us to participate in this great angelic drama, and that is a privilege.

It is one thing to be in the stands cheering for your favorite team. God makes this life possible so that you might find yourself on the field, running the ball down field. This is a great privilege, and when we perceive that God is giving us such a privilege, then we are to exploit it, applying the maximum amount of Bible doctrine.

Exodus 4:21a-b **And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. (NKJV)**

God speaks of wonders which He has placed in Moses' hand. This does not mean that Moses has something visible to carry with him (apart from the staff). The word *hand* is often used for what someone has in his possession or what someone is able to do or accomplish. God has given Moses the power to do several signs; and when it is called for, Moses will do these particular signs. Strictly speaking, Moses will usually point towards the place where God's power will be made manifest.

Again, it is unclear whether this is a new conversation or whether these are bits and pieces of what God had already said to Moses in the desert-wilderness. It is possible that God encouraged Moses along the way, perhaps speaking to him in his dreams. Or, more likely, this represents something that God said which Moses remembers

⁵⁵ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 17, 2017.

both while moving forward on this trip and later, when recording this information (this would have been recorded much later). It would make perfect sense for God to have said more to Moses than we read in chapters 3b–4a, but for Moses to bring these things to mind as he travels towards Egypt. In fact, these things *ought* to be on Moses' mind as he proceeds towards Egypt.

Traveling from Midian to Egypt would have been a slow, many-day process. Moses therefore has time to think; and I believe that we find these words at this point in the narrative to represent Moses thinking about what God had said to him.

Bear in mind that Moses is not 100% enthusiastic about this trip. He has expressed many misgivings when speaking with God. However, what Moses is doing right now—thinking about what God had said to him—that is the right thing for him to do, despite any reticence that he might be feeling.

Exodus 4:21c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> . This can also mean <i>forwards; the front part</i> [or, the edge of a sword]. L ^e pânîym (לפָּנֵי) can take on a temporal sense as well: <i>before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times</i> . Literally, this means <i>to faces of</i> .			
par ^e ʿoh (פָּרֹעַ) [pronounced <i>pahr^e-G^OH</i>]	<i>great house; possibly hair head (indicating one of great age and therefore with wisdom and authority); transliterated pharaoh</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6547 BDB #829

Translation: ...—[you will do them before Pharaoh](#).

Moses will have his staff and he will perform great miracles before Pharaoh of Egypt. In fact, these miracles are going to be far greater than Moses knows right now.

I used the realtor illustration before, and let me continue with it. There are some things that we rarely tell the future homeowner. We do not tell them the pride that they will have at the purchase of their new house; the enjoyment that they will have in this house that they own—the great family memories (I will remember times in my house as a child for the rest of my life; I remember back as far as standing around as a 3 year old kid while my father was building this house). We do not often tell them about the tax benefits or how, in the future, they will be able to use this house in order to buy another even better house. These things, they will cheerfully find out on their own. They do not necessarily need to know that during the actual transaction of purchasing the house.

Similarly, God is warning Moses about the difficulties that he will encounter; but God is not telling Moses just how much he will do with this staff. God will let Moses find that out on his own.

Exodus 4:21d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me;</i> (sometimes a verb is implied)	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
châzaq (חָזַק) [pronounced <i>khaw-ZAHK</i>]	<i>to bind someone with a girdle; to make strong, to strengthen; to fortify [a city]; to heal; to harden, to make obstinate</i>	1 st person singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #2388 BDB #304
The NET Bible: Heb "strengthen" (in the sense of making stubborn or obstinate). The text has the expression וְאֲנִי אֶחְזַק אֶת-לִבִּי (<i>va'ani 'akhazzeq 'et-libbo</i>), "I will make strong his will," or "I will strengthen his resolve," recognizing the "heart" as the location of decision making (see Prov 16:1, 9). ⁵⁶			
lêb (לֵב) [pronounced <i>lay^bv</i>]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking; midst</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524
The NET Bible: Here is the first mention of the hardening of the heart of Pharaoh. God first tells Moses he must do the miracles, but he also announces that he will harden Pharaoh's heart, as if working against Moses. It will help Moses to know that God is bringing about the resistance in order to bring a greater victory with greater glory. There is a great deal of literature on this, but see among the resources F. W. Danker, "Hardness of Heart: A Study in Biblical Thematic," CTM 44 (1973): 89-100; R. R. Wilson, "The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart," CBQ 41 (1979): 18-36; and R. B. Chisholm Jr., "Divine Hardening in the Old Testament," BSac 153 (1996): 410-34. ⁵⁷			

Translation: However, I, [even] I, will strengthen his heart...

This is one of the great topics of exodus, and one of the most difficult topics of this book. God says that he will give Pharaoh strength; that He, God, will strengthen Pharaoh. I think that we should understand it in this way. Pharaoh is going to be operating on negative signals throughout this whole ordeal. God is not going to reach into Pharaoh's volition and change his positive pole to negative or vice versa. What God is going to do is give Pharaoh the strength to act on his own volition.

Let's look at it this way. Some people, often as a result of their own bad decisions, get pushed to a very bad place in their lives. They struggle to continue on this same road, this road paved with their own negative volition towards God. There can come a point where, some people are so knocked back by life (again, usually the result of their own bad decisions) that they just give up and die. God will not allow Pharaoh to reach this point. God will give Pharaoh strength to act on his own convictions. Whereas, under normal circumstances, Pharaoh might roll into a fetal ball on the palace floor and just cry and shake; God will see to it that he never gets to that point.

⁵⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 17, 2017.

⁵⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 17, 2017.

Moses likely recorded all of this years later. It is possible that he recorded his conversation with God at Mount Horeb, and as he records his steps from Midian to Egypt, he recalls other things which God had said to him. It is also possible that God had again appeared to Moses, possibly several times, reassuring Moses in little steps.

Then we come to the place which most people find confusing. God hardens Pharaoh's heart. The only people not confused by this are the hyper-Calvinists who do not believe that we have the free will to act apart from God's plan. I should rephrase that. When it comes to salvation, there are the chosen and there are the damned. The chosen believe in God because God turned on their positive volition. They see *faith* as being the *gift of God* in Eph. 2:8,9⁵⁸. We are all corrupt; none of us has enough positive volition to chose God; and if we did, that would be works. That would imply some goodness in us which we do not possess. God foreknew those He would save—those who's volition He would turn to positive—and therefore, Christ only died for those people. God is glorified in all of this. Therefore, the hyper-Calvinists see nothing unusual about God "hardening Pharaoh's heart."

What is wrong with the hyper-Calvinist view of hardening Pharaoh's heart?

The problem with their position is this:

1. Man is corrupt and totally negative toward God.
2. Pharaoh is not only all of those things, but he will die an unbeliever.
3. Therefore, why would God have to do anything to Pharaoh's heart? It would be natural for Pharaoh to react negatively toward God's plan in the first place.
4. Hyper-Calvinists believe in the total depravity of man.
5. It is illogical for God to do inside Pharaoh what he would do out of his own depravity.

So, you observe that the people who do not have a problem with this passage are the ones who theology is overturned by what they believe.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

When we get further along in this, we will examine God hardening Pharaoh's heart. At some point in time, we will cover **the Doctrine of The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart**. A problem with the Calvinists, as it is with many theological positions, is this "all or nothing" mindset. On the one hand we have the Armenian way of thinking, which emphasizes man's free will as over ruling God's sovereignty; and the hyper-Calvinists on the other hand seeing God's sovereignty as overruling man's free will. Furthermore, they see man's free will as being illusionary at best when it comes to things spiritual. The theological conclusions of both positions are dangerous. The Armenian believes that everything depends upon them. However, everything depends upon God. The hyper-Calvinists become fatalistic. However, the Bible asserts our free will throughout the Old and New Testaments. Both positions are theological ones and it may not seem to be that important to the reader, but that theological position seeps into their Christian life and into their way of thinking. Their participation in God's plan is confused and contradictory. Their motivation is confused and their actions are confused. However, when the time is right, we will straighten all of this out.

Armenians, by the way, believe that we can lose our salvation by sinning enough. TULIP Calvinists believe that God sovereignly chooses those who will believe and He condemns those He has not chosen.

What might help to allay your troubles temporarily is that the Hebrew sometimes has a verb denoting action which expresses not the doing of the thing, but the permission to do so.⁵⁹ Bullinger points out several passages where this is done: Gen. 31:7 Jer. 4:10 Ezek. 14:9 20:25 etc. God is not forcing Pharaoh to harden his heart, but He is permitting him to do so. More of that later.

⁵⁸ It is not; not according to Eph. 2:8–9; *faith* is feminine and *it is* is in the neuter

⁵⁹ Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*

Exodus 4:21e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lō' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'am (אָם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: ...so that he will not send the people away.

God is warning Moses, "Listen, Pharaoh is not going to cooperate. He is not going to agree to send the people of Israel away. Be prepared for this."

God tells Moses a little about what is going to happen when he arrives there.

I was a real estate agent for many years, and I found out that it was beneficial to know the entire process of the purchase of the house, from the first offer to closing, and to be able to anticipate the problems and the various actions of the transaction. At that time, there might have been 30-35 people involved in the sale of a house, but your client or customer primarily interacts with you, the real estate agent. If anything goes wrong—even if it has nothing whatsoever to do with you, the agent—you are the person who will receive the blame if anything goes wrong. So, part of the duty of the real estate agent is not just to call your people and say, "Okay, such and such is now scheduled for Monday." It is the job of the real estate agent to warn the buyer (or seller) of the various things that may occur along the way. Personally, I always insisted that a buyer have a house inspected (even if the house is brand new), but at the same time, I prepared the buyer for the fact that a good inspector is going to find 10 or 15 things wrong with the property, some of them serious; and that a \$5000 repair bill (at that time) is not unusual; and it is not unusual for the seller to refuse to pay for the entire set of repairs. This approach was very helpful. The buyer understood what was going to happen. They were not shocked or surprised. If the seller said, "I am not doing a thing here," the buyer was prepared for that. They had time to let that idea digest before it even happened. As a result, I had very few sales that busted out.

This is what God is doing for Moses. God is going to tell Moses what is going to happen. God does not want Moses to be doing this or that before Pharaoh, and then become shocked when Pharaoh says, "Yeah, no; I am not going to let the people go." Moses does not need to go into some sort of tailspin because everything does not work out easily.

Application: Our lives are the same way. Being a believer in Jesus Christ does not mean that you will not have pressures and difficulties. In fact, if you go for a long period of time, and life is fairly easy, *that* is an unusual circumstance. Jesus has warned us that in this world, we will have tribulation, but He has overcome the world. So, when we reach these points of difficulty, we do whatever Bible doctrine tells us to do, but our faith is in Jesus Christ.

Application: I write this in 2016,⁶⁰ and the presidential election has not yet occurred. With the Supreme Court the way that it is, whoever appoints the next Supreme Court justice will just about change America forever. If Hillary Clinton is elected, abortion will become a basic constitutional right, but possessing firearms will not. There is no doubt about this. Many Americans, if they actually understand what is at stake, might be panicked. However, as believers in Jesus Christ, we need to understand that, even if Clinton is elected, and even if she continues to pull our country far, far left, by means of the courts, this is a part of the plan of God. We may be facing a cleansing in the future as a result of how many people have turned against God. The believer needs to take this in stride. We have enjoyed great prosperity; **client nation** U.S.A. has enjoyed a wonderful history and great freedoms; but that nation, because of the population, may go by the wayside (as happens to many client nations to God). The believer is to view all of this with a relaxed mental attitude, and move forward in his own spiritual life.

Back to the context: God warns Moses of what is going to happen, so that Moses is not shocked and surprised when it happens. This is quite important. What Moses faces is unlike anything any man has faced before. God allows Moses to know some of what is coming, so that Moses does not become too discouraged along the way. At the same time, God does not tell Moses everything that is coming, otherwise, he might point his donkey in the opposite direction.

Exodus 4:21d-e **But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.** (NKJV)

This is Moses recalling what God has said to him. He is pondering these words. The Hebrew word here for *harden* is *châzaq* (חָזַק) [pronounced *khaw-ZAHK*], and it means, *to make strong, to strengthen*. Strong's #2388 BDB #304. God is going to provide Pharaoh with the resolve (or strength) that he (Pharaoh) needs and desires. God is not determining what Pharaoh will do. God is not reaching into Pharaoh's soul and turning his positive volition into negative. God is giving Pharaoh the ability to express his volition, despite the tremendous pressure which is placed upon him. Throughout, I believe that Pharaoh always acts according to his own volition.

Throughout Scripture, God appears to take our volition very seriously and I do not believe that He messes with it. He does bring situations and circumstances to bear on what we are doing and thinking at any given time, but these situations still allow our volition to act freely.

It ought to be clear that two people can face the exact same set of circumstances, and one person will go left and the other person will go right. Many people spend their last hours of life on a deathbed (they realize that they are going to die), and some commune with God in those hours and some continue to reject God in these final hours, even cursing God with their final breath.

Little else is more integral to life than free will. It is my opinion that God does nothing to change Pharaoh's free will; God just gives him the ability to exercise it to the fullest extent.

From all that I have read in the Bible, I believe that God's sovereignty and the free will of men and angels coexist. God's sovereignty will win out in the end; but that God allows for us to make whatever decisions we make; and He does what He does (which often includes **divine discipline**, to guide us away from sin).

⁶⁰ I do not do the entire chapter all at once. I first do the basic Hebrew exegesis (which may take a week); then I add in the various translations (I may do this a year later and it takes around 3 or 4 days). At some time in the future I will look to add my commentary from the basic exegesis of this chapter (which I will send out as weekly Bible lessons); and after that, I will check out the works of other people and see if I have missed anything. So, I may spend several years on this chapter before I consider it to be complete.

Children are quite helpful to the person who tries to understand God's sovereignty versus man's free will. If you have children, then very likely you have disciplined them not to do X. They might do X several times, and each time, you impose whatever discipline you believe is appropriate to stop them. The normal parent does this because he (or she) believes that X is wrong for a person to do and/or that the child will end up being led astray in his life for doing that. As every parent knows (and dreads), their imposition of discipline may or may not curtail a child from doing X. And often, what works with one child may not work with his younger brother. That is because children have free will and as much as we might want to guide them in the right direction, our enactment of discipline does not always work.

So, around the house, the parent has sovereignty. Simultaneously we have these children in our care from the moment that they are born, so that we are able to exert our will over theirs from the earliest age. However, as any parent can tell you, even when that child is 2 feet tall, they might not obey you. The parent does everything that they can to guide the child in the right direction, and some respond positively and some do not—even if we are talking about siblings. Sometimes a child, with his free will, responds to our sovereignty in a way that is pleasing to us; and sometimes he does not.

My point being, we have free will and God has sovereignty. God guides and disciplines us, but that does not mean that we always obey Him.

Exodus 4:21 **Y^ehowah said to Moses, “When you go to return [to] Egypt, observe [and take note] of all the miracles I have placed into your hand—you will do them before Pharaoh. However, I, [even] I, will strengthen his heart so that he will not send the people away. (Kukis mostly literal translation)**

When the new believer finds out about naming his sins to God, the first thing that comes to his mind is, *so, I am going to confess my sins every 20 seconds?* (I have, in fact, had two believers express that very sentiment directly to me). The answer is, of course, yes. And, when we grow spiritually, believe it or not, we will maintain our fellowship with God for sometimes 10 minutes; later for 60 minutes; and later for even a half day or so.

Back to our narrative, where Moses is recalling things that God had said to him (I realize that I have repeated that fact, but there is a point which I will make).

Exodus 4:21 **Jehovah said to Moses, “When you return to Egypt, remember all of the power that I have placed into your hand—you will do great miracles before the Pharaoh there. However, I will strengthen Pharaoh's heart, so that he will choose not to send the people away. (Kukis paraphrase)**

This is a quote within a quote within a quote. What God is saying to Moses is in “quotation marks.” What God tells Moses to say to Pharaoh is in ‘single quotation marks.’ Where Moses is to quote God to Pharaoh, I have used *Italics*.

And you have said unto Pharaoh, ‘Thus has said Y^ehowah, *My son, My firstborn [is] Israel; and so I say unto you, send forth My son and he will serve Me. And so you refuse to send him forth, behold, I am killing your son, your firstborn.’ ”*

Exodus
4:22–23

And you will say to Pharaoh, ‘So Y^ehowah speaks [to you]: *Israel [is] My son, My firstborn; so I say to you, send My son out so that He may serve Me. And [if] you refuse to send him out, take note, I will kill your son, your firstborn.’ ”*

This is what you will say to Pharaoh, at the height of his negative volition. “Jehovah God says this to you: *Israel is My son; Israel is My firstborn. Let me make this clear: you must send My son out of Egypt in order that he serve Me. If you refuse to send him out to Me, then, take notice, I will kill your firstborn son.’ ”*

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And you have said unto Pharaoh, 'Thus has said Y ^e howah, <i>My son, My firstborn [is] Israel; and so I say unto you, send forth My son and he will serve Me. And so you refuse to send him forth, behold, I am killing your son, your firstborn.'</i> "
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum of Onkelos	. And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus said the Lord; Israel is My son, My firstborn. And I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve before Me; and if thou refuse to send him away, behold, I will kill thy son, thy firstborn.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And thou shalt say to Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My first-born son; and to thee I say, Let My son go free, that he may worship before Me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy first-born son.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And thou shalt say to him: Thus saith the Lord: Israel is my son, my firstborn. I have said to thee: Let my son go, that he may serve me, and thou wouldst not let him go: behold I will kill thy son, thy firstborn.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	You shall tell Pharaoh, 'Thus says Mar-Yah, Yisrael is my son, my firstborn, and I have said to you, "Let my son go, that he may serve me;" and you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.'
Peshitta (Syriac)	And you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the LORD, Israel is my first-born son; And I say to you, Let my son go, that he may serve me; and if you refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay your first-born son.
Septuagint (Greek)	And you shall say to Pharaoh, These things says the Lord, Israel is my first-born. And I said to you, Send away my people, that they may serve me: now if you will not send them away, see, I will slay your first-born son.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And you are to say to Pharaoh, The Lord says, Israel is the first of my sons: And I said to you, Let my son go, so that he may give me worship; and you did not let him go: so now I will put the first of your sons to death.
Easy English	Then you must speak to Pharaoh. You must say: "The Lord says, 'Israel is my first son. I have already said to you: "Let my son go so that he can worship me." But if you refuse to let him go, I will kill your first son.' "
<i>The Message</i>	Then you are to tell Pharaoh, 'GOD's Message: Israel is my son, my firstborn! I told you, "Free my son so that he can serve me." But you refused to free him. So now I'm going to kill your son, your firstborn.'
NIRV	Then say to Pharaoh, 'The Lord says, "Israel is like an oldest son to me. I told you, 'Let my son go. Then he will be able to worship me.' But you refused to let him go. So I will kill your oldest son.' "

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Then tell him that I have said, "Israel is my first-born son, and I commanded you to release him, so he could worship me. But you refused, and now I will kill your first-born son."
The Living Bible	Then you are to tell him, 'Jehovah says, "Israel is my eldest son, and I have commanded you to let him go away and worship me, but you have refused: and now see, I will slay your eldest son.'"
New Berkeley Version New Life Version	. The Lord said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, make sure you show Pharaoh all the works that I have placed in your power. But I will make his heart hard so that he will not let the people go. Then say to Pharaoh, 'The Lord says this: "Israel is My

New Living Translation son, My first-born. And I say to you, 'Let My son go. Let him work for Me.' But if you will not let him go, I will kill your son, your first-born." v. 21 is included for context. Then you will tell him, 'This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son. I commanded you, "Let my son go, so he can worship me." But since you have refused, I will now kill your firstborn son!"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Then you must tell Pharaoh, *This is what Jehovah has said: IsraEl is My firstborn, and I've told you to send My people away so they can serve Me; therefore, if you won't send them away, {Look!} I will destroy all your firstborn!*

Beck's American Translation .

International Standard V .

New Advent (Knox) Bible But I mean to harden his heart, so that he refuses to let my people go; and then thou shalt give him this message: Israel, says the Lord, is my first-born son, and when I bade thee give this son of mine leave to go and worship me, that leave was refused; I come to claim the life of thy first-born in return. A portion of v. 21 is included for context.

Translation for Translators Then say to him, 'This is what Yahweh says: "The Israeli *people* [MTY] are *as dear to me as firstborn sons* [MET]. I told you to let my people [MTY] leave *Egypt*, in order that they may worship me *in the desert*. If you refuse to let them go, I warn you, I will kill your firstborn son!" ' "

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible You is to have said to Pharaoh: Jehovah is to have said: Isra-el, my son, my first-born, even was I to direct: My son, be you letting loose, for he was to serve me. Was you to refuse to let him loose? - I am to slay your son, your first born.

Conservapedia "You will say to Pharaoh, 'The LORD says, "Israel is my son, as my firstborn. I say to you: dismiss my son, so that he may serve me: and if your refuse to dismiss him, I'll kill your firstborn son.'" A direct reference to the final Plague Upon the Firstborn.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ' Thus said the EVER- LIVING, — Israel is My eldest son, and I say to you, Allow My son to go to serve Him ; and if you will not allow him, then I will slay your eldest son.' "

Lexham English Bible And you must say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says Yahweh, "Israel [is] my son, my firstborn." And I said to you, "Release my son and let him serve me," but you refused to release him. Look, I [am about] to kill your son, your firstborn.'" "

Wikipedia Bible Project And you said to Pharaoh: "Thus said Yahweh: 'My firstborn son is Israel. And he says to you, send my son, and he will serve me, and if you keep from sending him, then I myself will kill your firstborn son.'" "

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) You shall then say to Pharaoh: 'This is Yah weh's message: Israel is my firstborn son, and I said to you: Let my son go that he may worship me. But you have refused to let him go and, be cause of this, I will take the life of your firstborn son.'" "

The Heritage Bible And you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says Jehovah, My firstborn son is Israel; And I say to you, Send my son out, and he will serve me; and if you refuse to send him out, behold, I will fatally strike your firstborn son.

New American Bible (2002) So you shall say to Pharaoh: Thus says the LORD: Israel is my son, my first-born. Hence I tell you: Let my son go, that he may serve me. If you refuse to let him go, I warn you, I will kill your son, your first-born."

New Jerusalem Bible	You will then say to Pharaoh, "This is what Yahweh says: Israel is my first-born son. I told you: Let my son go and worship me; but since you refuse to let him go, well then! I shall put your first-born son to death." ' "
Revised English Bible	Then tell Pharaoh that these are the words of the LORD: Israel is my firstborn son. I tell you, let my son go to worship me. Should you refuse to let him go, I shall kill your firstborn son."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then you are to tell Pharaoh: 'ADONAI says, "Isra'el is my firstborn son. I have told you to let my son go in order to worship me, but you have refused to let him go. Well, then, I will kill your firstborn son!"'
exeGeses companion Bible	And you say to Paroh, Thus says Yah Veh: Yisra El is my son - my firstbirth: and I say to you, Send my son away, that he serve me: and if you refuse to send him away, behold, I slaughter your son - your firstbirth.
Kaplan Translation	You must say to Pharaoh, 'This is what God says: Israel is My son, My firstborn. I have told you to let My son go and serve Me. If you refuse to let him leave, I will [ultimately] kill your own first-born son.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith Hashem, Yisroel is beni (My son), even My bechor (first-born): And I say unto thee, Let beni (My son) go, that he may serve Me: and if thou refuse to let him go, hinei, I will slay thy ben, even thy bechor.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"And you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus said הוהי, "Yisra'el is My son, My first-born, so I say to you, let My son go to serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, see, I am killing your son, your first-born." ' ' "

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Then say to the king [Pharaoh], 'This is what [Thus] the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son [^c the privileged child]. I told you to let my son go so he may worship [serve] me. But you refused to let Israel go, so I will kill your firstborn son [11:1-10]."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even my first-born; and I say unto thee, Let My son go that he may serve me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born. This threat looks forward to the last of the Egyptian plagues. The fact that Israel is called God's first-born son suggests, even here, that the Lord would later choose others, that He would gain spiritual children out of the heathen nations.
NET Bible®	You must say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, "Israel is my son, my firstborn, and I said to you, 'Let my son go that he may serve me,' but since you have refused to let him go, I will surely kill your son, your firstborn!"'
The Voice	Eternal One: Then I want you to give Pharaoh a message <i>for Me</i> . <i>Tell him</i> , "This is what the Eternal says: 'Israel is My firstborn son. I say to you, "Release My son, so that he may serve Me," but <i>in your stubbornness</i> you refused to free him; therefore, I am going to kill your firstborn son."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and "YHWH ^{He Is} said to "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} , in your walking to turn back unto "Mits'rayim ^{Two straits} , see all the wonders which I placed in your hand, and you will do them <in front of> "Paroh ^{Great house} , and I will seize his heart and he will not send
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the people, and you will say to "Paroh ^{Great house}" in this way, "YHWH ^{He is}" said, my firstborn son is "Yisra'el ^{He turns El aside}",...

Green's Literal Translation NASB

. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, "Israel is My son, My firstborn. 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.'"

New King James Version

Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.'"

Stuart Wolf

Young's Updated LT

. And you have said unto Pharaoh, Thus said Jehovah, My son, My first-born is Israel, and I say unto you, Send away My son, and he does serve Me; and—you will refuse to send him away—lo, I am slaying your son, your first-born."

The gist of this passage: Moses would also speak to Pharaoh, telling him, "This is what God says to you: 'Israel is My firstborn son; release him to worship me or I will kill your firstborn.'"

Exodus 4:22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord: *Israel is My son, My firstborn.* (I have again taken liberties with the formatting of the text here of the NKJV.)

On this long ride to Egypt, Moses continues to think about what God said to him. Think about this, if you will: God speaking audibly to Moses right now and Moses considering what God has said to him—these are virtually the same thing. You may think, *no, no way; those things are very different;* but from a practical standpoint, *are they really?* Whether Moses hears God's audible voice or he simply thinks about what God has already said to him, the actual impact upon Moses' soul is essentially the same.

When Moses thinks about God's words and decides, *okay, I believe that;* that is when Moses begins to grow spiritually. This is how all believers grow—we hear the Word of God (by whatever means), we consider the Word of God; and then we believe the Word of God. At that point, it begins to affect our spiritual lives for the better.

So many Christians think that, in some way, they have missed out. We have never spoken with a burning bush; we never sat down at the feet of Jesus as He lectured a crowd. But, as you learn Bible doctrine, you can mentally go to that place at any time during your life. Each day, as often as possible, you should be thinking Bible doctrine. You should be able to take your time and place in life and integrate this with God's thinking. **Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,...** (Philip. 2:5; VW) Paul did not write these words in such a way as to suggest, *now here's a good idea.* In the Greek, this is a command (it is a present passive imperative). This means, we are enjoined to allow the thinking of Christ to become our thinking. That happens *only* when we believe God's words. And this is exactly what Moses is doing. He is replaying in his mind what God said to him as he travels along. That process is powerful within Moses' soul. In fact, it might even be more powerful, because Moses is not talking back as he ruminates on the words of God (recall that Moses engaged in a lot of talking back to God when they communicated directly in real time).

Exodus 4:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Exodus 4:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
The NET Bible: <i>The sequence of the instruction from God uses the perfect tense with vav (ו), following the preceding imperfects.</i> ⁶¹			
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
par ^e ōh (פַּרְעֹה) [pronounced pah ^r -GŌH]	<i>great house; possibly hair head (indicating one of great age and therefore with wisdom and authority); transliterated pharaoh</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6547 BDB #829
kōh (כֹּה) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence; now; in the meantime</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
The NET Bible: <i>The instantaneous use of the perfect tense fits well with the prophetic announcement of what Yahweh said or says. It shows that the words given to the prophet are still binding.</i> ⁶²			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: And you will say to Pharaoh, 'So Y^ehowah speaks [to you]:...

We have another quote within a quote within a quote. From v. 21 through v. 23, God is speaking to Moses. He is telling Moses what he will say to Pharaoh. This is the small amount of text where God says, what Moses will say to Pharaoh. "This is what God says to you," is a quote within a quotation. Moses is to look Pharaoh in the eye and say these words (or, Aaron, as the case may be).

In fact, this is actually quite humorous again. God has agreed to Moses' demands, that he will have a spokesman, but God is saying this to Moses, using the 2nd person masculine singular: *I am talking to you specifically, Moses*, is what this means. And God tells Moses, *you will say this*.

Now, Moses has his family packed up, he is going to Egypt; and he perhaps thinks to himself, "Well, no doubt, God means Aaron." God is not confused. He means Moses.

⁶¹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

⁶² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

Exodus 4:22a **Then you shall say to Pharaoh,...** (NKJV)

God is going to make an analogy here. Interestingly enough, even though God agrees that Aaron will be Moses' spokesman, God says, "**You** [2nd person masculine singular] **will say to Pharaoh.**" At this point, Moses will be doing the talking. This is very subtle, so Moses may be thinking this in his mind, but not fully realizing that is what God has said to him.

Exodus 4:22b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
b ^e kôwr (בְּכוֹר) [pronounced <i>b^eKOHR</i>]	<i>firstborn; metaphorically used for anything which is chief or first of its kind</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1060 BDB #114
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The metaphor uses the word "son" in its connotation of a political dependent, as it was used in ancient documents to describe what was intended to be a loyal relationship with well-known privileges and responsibilities, like that between a good father and son. The word can mean a literal son, a descendant, a chosen king (and so, the Messiah), a disciple (in Proverbs), and here, a nation subject to God. If the people of Israel were God's "son," then they should serve him and not Pharaoh. Malachi reminds people that the Law said "a son honors his father," and so God asked, "If I am a father, where is my honor?" (Mal 1:6).</i>⁶³</p>			
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun; God-given name to Jacob; and national name for the Jewish people	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The name Israel means "God fights" (although some interpret the meaning as "he fights [with] God"). See Gen 32:28.</i>⁶⁴</p>			

Translation: *...Israel [is] My son, My firstborn;...*

Moses is to convey this information, which is what God is saying directly to Pharaoh: "Israel is My son, he is My firstborn." So God brings this to the level that Pharaoh, who has a son, ought to understand. "You have a firstborn son; I have a firstborn son; you feel Me?"

Exodus 4:22 **Then you** [2nd person masculine singular] **shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord: *Israel is My son, My firstborn.*** (NKJV)

This is the first time in the Bible when the word *Israel* (rather than *the sons of Israel*) is applied to the people of Israel. We understand that word today to refer to the nation Israel; but that nation is made up of people—and that is to whom this word refers.

Interestingly enough, this is the final warning that Moses will issue to Pharaoh for the 10th and final plague. Also, by this time, it will be Moses issuing the warnings directly to Pharaoh rather than through his brother Aaron.

⁶³ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

⁶⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen35.htm> (footnote) accessed January 2, 2015.

Exodus 4:22 *And you will say to Pharaoh, ‘So Y^ehowah speaks [to you]: Israel [is] My son, My firstborn;... (Kukis mostly literal translation)*

Exodus 4:23a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
shâlach (שלח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>send, send off, send away [back], dismiss, give over, cast out, let go, set free, shoot forth [branches], shoot [an arrow]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
'êth (את) [pronounced ayth]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: *...so I say to you, send My son out...*

“Here is what I require you to do, Pharaoh—send my son out of Egypt.” That is, God is calling for Pharaoh to allow the people of Israel to come out to worship Him.

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

With a voluntative, cohortative or jussive, the wâw conjunction means *that, so that*. It expresses *intention*. The wâw conjunction can express informal inference or consequence (*so, then, therefore*); especially at the beginning of a speech. The wâw conjunction can connect alternative cases or contrasting ideas and be properly rendered *or, but, yet*. The wâw conjunction can also be rendered *for*.

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ābad (עָבַד) [pronounced <i>gaw^b-VAHD</i>]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
The NET Bible: <i>The text uses the imperative, "send out" (שִׁלַּח, shallakh) followed by the imperfect or jussive with the vav (ו) to express purpose.</i> ⁶⁵			

Translation: ...so that He may serve Me.

The wāw conjunction can occasionally indicate purpose, and the purpose of the sons of Israel coming out is to serve God.

Exodus 4:23c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mā'ên (מָאֵן) [pronounced <i>maw-AIN</i>]	<i>to refuse, to be unwilling; to cease, to leave off</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #3985 BDB #549
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shâlach (שִׁלַּח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	Piel infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
The NET Bible: <i>The Piel infinitive serves as the direct object of the verb, answering the question of what Pharaoh would refuse to do. The command and refusal to obey are the grounds for the announcement of death for Pharaoh's son.</i> ⁶⁶			
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, exclamatory particle, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59

⁶⁵ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

⁶⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

Exodus 4:23c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hârag (הָרַג) [pronounced haw-RAHG]	<i>killing, slaying, executing; destroying, ruining</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #2026 BDB #246
The NET Bible: <i>The construction is very emphatic. The particle הִנֵּה (hinneh) gives it an immediacy and a vividness, as if God is already beginning to act. The participle with this particle has the nuance of an imminent future act, as if God is saying, "I am about to kill." These words are not repeated until the last plague.⁶⁷</i>			
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated to	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
b ^e kôwr (רִאשׁוֹן) [pronounced b ^e KOHR]	<i>firstborn; metaphorically used for anything which is chief or first of its kind</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1060 BDB #114

Translation: *And [if] you refuse to send him out, take note, I will kill your son, your firstborn.' "*

Then God gets down right where Pharaoh lives. "If you refuse to send out My son, then listen very carefully: I will kill your firstborn son." The language is unequivocal. All of this will occur after it is clear that God has the power.

God first warns Moses that He will strengthen Pharaoh's heart and that Pharaoh would not let His people go (v. 21); and here, God tells Moses exactly what he will say, setting up an similarity to Pharaoh between God and His firstborn son and Pharaoh and his firstborn son.

There are many conversations which we find in Scripture, and it is clear that they have been condense or edited. I do not think that this is the case here. First of all, this is God speaking to Moses. Why would Moses presume to be able to edit God down? In future chapters, God will lay out the Law that Moses will teach the people, and it appears that Moses includes every syllable that God says. It is reasonable that Moses would do the same here.

Exodus 4:23 *So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.' "* (I continue taking liberties with the formatting of the NKJV, using italics to represent a quote within a quote within a quote.)

Exodus 4:23 *...so I say to you, send My son out so that He may serve Me. And [if] you refuse to send him out, take note, I will kill your son, your firstborn.' "* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

God flash-forwards to the end, to Moses giving God's final warning to Pharaoh. Moses will speak for God at that point. Moses will speak directly to Pharaoh at this point. So that Pharaoh can understand the connection, God speaks of Israel as *His son* and the contrast will be with Pharaoh and his son. Paraphrasing, God is telling Pharaoh, "You know how you feel about your own son; that is how I feel about Israel."

I do not believe that Pharaoh will appreciate these words of God. He may hear them, but he will not (in my opinion) ruminate on how he loves his own son will be very much parallel to how God feels about Israel. In other

⁶⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

words, Moses is ruminating on the words of God; Pharaoh will choose not to think about them. Two men; the exact same words; Moses considered them and thought about them as he traveled towards Egypt; but Pharaoh, despite all that happens to him and to Egypt, will choose not to think much about the words that come to him from God.

The killing of the firstborn is to be the final and most dramatic of the plagues God put upon Egypt.

These are God's marching orders to Moses. I believe that these words, spoken by God to Moses earlier, are the words that Moses concentrates on as he begins his trip from Midian to Egypt.

However, despite how you may feel about the narrative, at this point, Moses and his family have not gone very far; and they will suddenly be stopped in their tracks. It may seem odd to you, because here is Moses, doing what God asked him to do, packing up and leading his family to Egypt; and he is thinking about God and what God said to him—exactly what Moses ought to be doing—and yet, God is going to stop this family from going any further and Moses will face the **sin unto death**.

Furthermore, there is a definite flow in vv. 21–23: *And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord: "Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn."'"* (NKJV) What God says to Moses is an excellent summary of what Moses will face. In so doing, God is preparing Moses for all that follows.

Whether God is appearing to Moses on several different occasions or whether Moses is recalling these things to his mind as he sets off toward Egypt, the implication is clear: Moses, on this trip, is thinking doctrine and is being exposed to doctrine. Doctrine is God's Word and Moses has doctrine now pervading his soul. This is the only way to approach one's spiritual service. God has given Moses the overview of what will occur (the Pharaoh will not listen to Moses) and what the final ultimatum to the Pharaoh will be. the death of the first born.

Under Egyptian bondage, it is possible that circumcision among the Israelites had been neglected by some (however, not by Moses' parents because his adoptive mother recognized that he was a Hebrew immediately in Exodus 2:6). We do know, however, that Moses did neglect the circumcision of his own children—at least his youngest.

Exodus 4:22–23 *And you will say to Pharaoh, 'So Y^ehowah speaks [to you]: Israel [is] My son, My firstborn; so I say to you, send My son out so that He may serve Me. And [if] you refuse to send him out, take note, I will kill your son, your firstborn.'* " (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:22–23 *This is what you will say to Pharaoh, at the height of his negative volition. "Jehovah God says this to you: Israel is My son; Israel is My firstborn. Let me make this clear: you must send My son out of Egypt in order that he serve Me. If you refuse to send him out to Me, then, take notice, I will kill your firstborn son."* (Kukis paraphrase)

Circumcision is one of the things which sets the Israelites apart from surrounding heathen. Because "sons" is in the plural in v. 20, we know that Moses had two or more sons; and because "son" is in the singular in v. 25 that we have two possible scenarios: (1) Moses had all of his sons circumcised until the last one which his wife overruled; or (2) Moses did not have any of his children circumcised, and when cutting off the foreskin of the last son, his wife threw a tantrum. It is possible that Moses had suggested circumcision before but had been overruled by his wife; or it is possible that he never took this stand. Whatever the case, not all of his children were circumcised.

What God will expect from Moses is an all or nothing stance. He is about to lead two million malcontents across the desert for forty years. He is about to stand in front of Pharaoh and do what is unprecedented: demand the release of two million slaves because this is God's demand. Not only is it the demand of God, but the Pharaoh

will see Him as a local god; peculiar to the Israelites. Therefore, Moses cannot follow God's plan in a half-assed way.

See [addendum](#) for an abbreviated Doctrine of [Circumcision](#) there.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Moses Faces the Sin unto Death Until His Second Son is Circumcised

At this point, Moses is leading his family out of Midian and they are traveling towards Egypt. They don't get very far before something quite dramatic occurs. However, for the casual reader, it is very hard to fully comprehend and appreciate what is happening.

In vv. 24–26, there is an unusual incident which appears to involve circumcision and the sin unto death. What makes this incident particularly unusual is, it is very poorly recounted, so that we need to read a lot into it. Most of the narrative of Exodus is fairly easy to follow; but this particular incident, not so much. In fact, it may be helpful for you to read the entire passage first, before we study it in detail:

Exodus 4:24–26 [At a lodging place on the way the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" So He let him alone. It was then that she said, "A bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision. \(ESV; capitalized\)](#)

When reading this, your understanding of what is taking place is going to be quite limited. For some reason, God wants to kill Moses; Moses' wife then circumcises their son (but she seems to be upset about it); and everything appears to be back to normal after this—that is, the narrative just continues as before, and nothing later is said about this incident).

Where all of this leads might surprise you. That is, taking in this passage and realizing that Moses circumcised his first son (or ordered his wife to do it), reveals a lot of information about Moses and his knowledge of the Scriptures (which, at that time, would have been the book of Genesis).

First off, I have a theory concerning the weak narrative at this point. I believe that Moses, during this time, was very ill—sick to the point of death. So he faded in and out; and he knew what was going on, but just barely. Therefore, his recollection at this point is not as good as his recollection of other incidents in his life. He was literally dying in front of his wife and barely had enough strength to let her know what she needed to do (this is all conjecture, but it fits well with the threadbare narrative).

As a result of the limited narrative at this point, we are going to have to do some careful analysis and do some logical speculation in order to develop a full picture of what is taking place.

Regarding the inspiration of Scripture—the human authors are moved along by the Holy Spirit; but they do not act as secretaries for the Spirit. The personality, vocabulary, intelligence, sensibilities and experiences of the human author are *always* a part of the text. Every word of Scripture is inspired by God the Holy Spirit; yet every word also reflects the thinking and perception of the human author. The written Word of God is very much the Word of God and the words of men. For every single verse in the Bible, the words used are the words of God conveying God's perfect message to man. However, simultaneously these are exactly the words of the author—in this case Moses, as if he were simply recording these events based upon his own perception of his own experience. What I have just described is the verbal plenary interpretation of the inspiration of Scripture (which is the conservative, orthodox understanding of the authority of the Scriptures).

So, it is possible for this to be Moses' recollection of what happened, taking into consideration that he was very sick at the time and has a very limited memory of these events. However, at the same time, these same words are the words of God, conveying to us divine information from Him as well.

Let's take this verse-by-verse and see if we can develop a better understanding of what is going on:

The NET Bible: *The next section (vv. 24-26) records a rather strange story. God had said that if Pharaoh would not comply he would kill his son – but now God was ready to kill Moses, the representative of Israel, God's own son. Apparently, one would reconstruct that on the journey Moses fell seriously ill, but his wife, learning the cause of the illness, saved his life by circumcising her son and casting the foreskin at Moses' feet (indicating that it was symbolically Moses' foreskin). The point is that this son of Abraham had not complied with the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. No one, according to Exod 12:40-51, would take part in the Passover-exodus who had not complied. So how could the one who was going to lead God's people not comply? The bold anthropomorphisms and the location at the border invite comparisons with Gen 32, the Angel wrestling with Jacob. In both cases there is a brush with death that could not be forgotten. See also, W. Dumbrell, "Exodus 4:24-25: A Textual Re-examination," HTR 65 (1972): 285-90; T. C. Butler, "An Anti-Moses Tradition," JSOT 12 (1979): 9-15; and L. Kaplan, "And the Lord Sought to Kill Him," HAR 5 (1981): 65-74.⁶⁸*

And so he is in the way in the camp and so meets him Y^ehowah and so He seeks his execution.

Exodus
4:24

And it is, along [lit., *in, upon*] the way in the camp, that Y^ehowah met Moses [lit., *him*] and He sought to kill him.

And it came to pass that, while Moses was moving along the way and was in his camp, that Jehovah met Moses and decided to kill him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he is in the way in the camp and so meets him Y ^e howah and so He seeks his execution.
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum of Onkelos	And it was in the way, at the place of lodging, that the Angel of the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	But it was on the way, in the place of lodging that the angel of the Lord met him, and sought to kill him, because Gershom his son had not been circumcised, inasmuch as Jethro his father-in-law had not permitted him to circumcise him: but Eliezer had been circum-cised, by an agreement between them two.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And when he was in his journey, in the inn, the Lord met him, and would have killed him.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	It happened on the way at a lodging place, that Mar-Yah met Mosha and wanted to kill him.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass when Moses was on his way to the inn that the LORD met him and sought to kill him.
Septuagint (Greek)	And it came to pass <i>that</i> the angel of the Lord met him by the way in the inn, and sought to slay him.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

⁶⁸ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

Easy English	Now on the journey, at the night's resting-place, the Lord came in his way and would have put him to death.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Moses' Son Circumcised On the way to Egypt, Moses stopped at a place to spend the night. The LORD met Moses at that place and tried to kill him.
Good News Bible (TEV) NIRV	At a camping place on the way to Egypt, the Lord met Moses and tried to kill him. On the way to Egypt, Moses stopped for the night. There the Lord met him and was about to kill him. But Zipporah got a knife made out of flint. She circumcised her son with it. Then she touched Moses' feet with the skin she had cut off. "Surely, you are a husband who has forced me to spill my son's blood," she said. V. 25 is included for context.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	During their journey, as they camped overnight, the LORD met Moses and tried to kill him.
Contemporary English V. The Living Bible	One night while Moses was in camp, the LORD was about to kill him. As Moses and his family were traveling along and had stopped for the night, Jehovah appeared to Moses and threatened to kill him.
New Berkeley Version New Century Version	. As Moses was on his way to Egypt, he stopped at a resting place for the night. The LORD met him there and tried to kill him.
New Living Translation	On the way to Egypt, at a place where Moses and his family had stopped for the night, the LORD confronted him and was about to kill him.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, [during their journey], a messenger of Jehovah met them along the way at an inn, who wanted to kill [Moses' son].
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	. <i>Zipporah Circumcises Moses' Son</i> But later on, at the lodging place along the way, the LORD met Moses [Lit. <i>him</i>] and was about to kill him.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	On this journey, at one of his halting-places, the Lord came in his path and threatened him with death, until Sephora took a sharp stone, and circumcised her son with it; then, touching her husband's feet with the flesh, she said, Now we are betrothed in blood. V. 25 is included for context.
Translation for Translators	Zipporah circumcised her son <i>One night, as they were camping on the way to Egypt, Yahweh appeared to Moses/me. He wanted/threatened to kill Moses/me for disobeying his command that boys/sons be circumcised.</i>

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	On the way, in the lodging place, Jehovah was to meet him and was to require to kill him.
Conservapedia	Now it happened by the road to the lodging-house, the LORD encountered him and was seeking to put him to death. Why? Because Moses had not circumcised his son. God required that Moses address that remaining issue.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But while he was upon the road at a resting place, a Chieftain 1 met him and attempted to kill him ; but Ziforah took a razor and cut off the foreskin of her son and threw it at his feet, and said, " You make a blood-marriage for me." V. 25 is included for context.

God's Truth (Tyndale)	And it chanced by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him and would have killed him.
HCSB	On the trip, at an overnight campsite, it happened that the LORD confronted him and sought to put him to death.
Lexham English Bible	{And} on the way, at the place of overnight lodging, Yahweh encountered him and sought to kill him.
Urim-Thummim Version	Now it came to pass on the way, in the place of lodging, that YHWH encountered Moses' son, and was required to kill him.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And it was on the way, in a lodging, and Yahweh met him, and sought to put him to death.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	At a lodging place on the way, the Angel of Yahweh approached Moses and tried to kill him.
New American Bible (2002)	On the journey, at a place where they spent the night, the Lord came upon Moses and would have killed him. [24-26] Apparently God was angry with Moses for having failed to keep the divine command given to Abraham in → Genesis 17:10-12. Moses' life is spared when his wife circumcises their son.
New American Bible (2011)	On the journey, at a place where they spent the night, the LORD came upon Moses and sought to put him to death. [4:24–26] This story continues to perplex commentators and may have circulated in various forms before finding its place here in Exodus. Particularly troublesome is the unique phrase “spouse of blood.” Nevertheless, v. 26, which apparently comes from the hand of a later commentator on the original story, is intended to offer some clarification. It asserts that when Zipporah used the problematic expression (addressing it either to Moses or her son), she did so with reference to the circumcision performed on her son—the only place in the Bible where this rite is performed by a woman. Whatever the precise meaning of the phrase “spouse of blood,” circumcision is the key to understanding it as well as the entire incident. One may conclude, therefore, that God was angry with Moses for having failed to keep the divine command given to Abraham in Gn 17:10–12 and circumcise his son. Moses' life is spared when his wife circumcises their son.
New Jerusalem Bible	On the journey, when he had halted for the night, Yahweh encountered him and tried to kill him.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	At a lodging-place on the way, Adonai met Moshe and would have killed him, had not Tziporah taken a flintstone and cut off the foreskin of her son. She threw it at his feet, saying, “What a bloody bridegroom you are for me!” But then, God let Moshe be. She added, “A bloody bridegroom because of the circumcision!” Vv. 25–26 are included for context.
exeGesés companion Bible	And so be it, on the way, in the lodge, Yah Veh meets him and seeks to deathify him.
Israeli Authorized Version Kaplan Translation	And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that YY met him, and sought to kill him. When they were in the place where they spent the night along the way, God confronted Moses and wanted to kill him. [God wanted to kill] Moses, for not circumcising his son. According to others, it was for delaying (see Exodus 4:27; Rashbam cf. Nedarim 34a). Some say that God wanted to kill the uncircumcised infant (Nedarim 32a).
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And it came to pass on the derech at the malon, that Hashem met him, and sought to kill him.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	·As Moses was on his way to Egypt [^L On the way], he stopped at a resting place for the night. The Lord met him there and tried to kill him.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And it came to pass by the way in the inn that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. In the place where Moses and his family encamped for the night while on the journey, the Lord threatened to take his life by a sudden disease, because he had neglected to circumcise his second son, Eliezer. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and His people, and could not be omitted without grave consequences.
NET Bible®	Now on the way, at a place where they stopped for the night [Or “at a lodging place” or “at an inn.”], the Lord met Moses and sought to kill him.
Syndein/Thieme	And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that Jehovah/God met him {Moses}, and 'sought to cause him to die'. {Note: We have to fill in the blanks here. From the verses coming up, we see that the issue was the non-circumcision of Moses' son. For disobeying God, Moses here is dying the sin unto death.}
The Voice	.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and (it) (came to pass), in the road, in the place of lodging, and "YHWH ^{He Is} " encountered him and he searched out to [kill] him,...
Concordant Literal Version	It came to be on the way, in the lodging, that a messenger of Yahweh encountered him and sought to put him to death.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And it came to pass, on the way, in the resting-place for the night, that Yahweh fell upon him, and sought to kill him.
English Standard Version	At a lodging place on the way the LORD met him and sought to put him to death.
Green's Literal Translation	And it happened on the way, in the lodging place, Jehovah met him and sought to kill him.
New King James Version	And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him.
Stuart Wolf	.
Young's Updated LT	And it comes to pass in the way, in a lodging place, that Jehovah meets him, and seeks to put him to death.

The gist of this passage: God meets Moses and seeks to kill him.

Exodus 4:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

Exodus 4:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Without a specific subject and object, the verb <i>hâyâh</i> often means <i>and it will come to be</i> , <i>and it will come to pass</i> , <i>then it came to pass</i> (with the <i>wâw</i> consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently</i> , <i>afterwards</i> , <i>later on</i> , <i>in the course of time</i> , <i>after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning</i>	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	No Strong's # BDB #88
When the <i>bêyth</i> preposition is followed by an infinitive, it forms a periphrasis for the gerund and is commonly expressed by the conjunctions <i>while, when, in that, after that, if, though, even if</i> . ⁶⁹			
derek ^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced DEH-rek ^e]	<i>way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; by means of, about, concerning</i>	primarily a preposition of proximity; however, it has a multitude of functions	No Strong's # BDB #88
When the <i>bêyth</i> preposition is followed by an infinitive, it forms a periphrasis for the gerund and is commonly expressed by the conjunctions <i>while, when, in that, after that, if, though, even if</i> . ⁷⁰			
mâlôwn (מַלְוֵן) [pronounced maw-LOHN]	<i>inn, lodging place, camp</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4411 BDB #533

Translation: And it is, along [lit., *in, upon*] the way in the camp,...

This appears to have happened when Moses was on route to Egypt; he was not lollygagging about; he was not taking the wrong turn here or there. He is on the correct route and he is in a camp—now whether this is a place that Moses rents for the night (an inn) or whether this is Moses' own camp, we do not know.

⁶⁹ Okay, a periphrasis is *a round about way of speaking or saying something*. A gerund is a verb which often functions as a noun (in English, our gerunds often end in *ing*).

⁷⁰ Okay, a periphrasis is *a round about way of speaking or saying something*. A gerund is a verb which often functions as a noun (in English, our gerunds often end in *ing*).

Exodus 4:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pāgash (פָּגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>paw-GASH</i>]	<i>to rush upon [anyone]; to attack; to meet, to encounter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #6298 BDB #803
The Greek inserts <i>angel</i> here.			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: ...that Y^ehowah met Moses [lit., *him*]...

God meets up with Moses at this point. This does not mean a physical confrontation. As will be discussed, this could indicate that Moses suddenly fell ill; deathly ill. Based upon this text, that may not seem reasonable at first, but these 3 verses (vv. 24–26) have confused a great many commentators for hundreds of years.

Exodus 4:24c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bāqash (שָׁקַח) [pronounced <i>baw-KAHSH</i>]	<i>to seek, to search, to desire, to strive after, to attempt to get, to require, to demand, to ask, to seek with desire and diligence</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1245 BDB #134
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

Translation: ...and He sought to kill him.

God's intention is to kill Moses. No doubt, you read this and wonder, *what the heck is going on? Moses is on his way to do what God has told him to do; now God wants to kill him?*

Exodus 4:24 *And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the Lord met him and sought to kill him.*

I have assumed that the *him* in this verse refers to Moses. Certainly, one could understand this to refer to his son; but then the confused, threadbare narrative makes very little sense. Would not Moses, the author and the man who loves who sons, specifically cite his son as God's target? Secondly, a child is not responsible for his own circumcision—this is a choice made by parents long before they take the volition of their son into consideration.

So, if God wants to kill the son, then God is going after the wrong person—his circumcision or lack thereof was not his choice. The person who made the choice, ultimately on whether the son would be circumcised is Moses. This makes Moses and not his son culpable. Finally, even if it is Zipporah who has objected to the second son being circumcised, even she is not the one at fault here—even if she dug her heels in and said, “You will not commit this act of barbarism, Moses; and I won’t do it either.” In marriage, the man is the ultimate authority; and therefore, he is responsible. Moses is the man, the husband, the one with authority. Certainly, a man can give in to his wife’s wishes from time to time, but not here, not in the economy of Israel, not with regards to circumcision.

In any case, this sudden threat by God is a great surprise. God has, with no little effort, convinced Moses to go to Egypt; and yet, suddenly, God meets him along the way, and threatens Moses with the sin unto death—that is how we should understand the Lord meeting him and seeking to kill him. The sin unto death means that God kills the believer (or allows the believer to be killed) before his time on earth is up. (This does not mean that every early death of a believer is the sin unto death.)

The sin unto death means that God is going to remove the believer from this life prematurely due to sins, disobedience and/or general recalcitrance on the part of the believer. There is not a specific sin (or complex of sins) which leads to the sin unto death; and *only* the person under this final stage of discipline can turn things around. He must change his own mind; he must change his negative volition to positive. The sin unto death occurs at the point that a person apparently will not spend any more time of his life in fellowship, will not produce any **divine good**, and/or through his own personal choices cannot continue moving forward in the plan of God. Moses cannot go into Egypt and lead the Hebrew people as long as he has an uncircumcised son. That is the problem here.

There are no details given here. We may surmise, from the next verse that, the problem is, Moses’ son has not been circumcised. Interestingly enough, there is not an overabundance of details given here. How did Moses know what was happening? How did he know why it was happening? Did God speak to him? Did Moses figure all of this out on his own, perhaps after being struck by a debilitating disease along the way?

What Moses appears to understand is, he is dying; and to regain his strength and vigor, his second son must be circumcised.

Remember how I have presented Moses and the words of God. I believe that he is thinking about what God has said to him along the way. If Moses knows Genesis—and I believe that he at least knows some of it—then Moses knows about circumcision. Perhaps while God’s words are going through his mind, Moses is also thinking about incidents from the book of Genesis. I am being speculative, of course.

One should also note that, only one son of Moses has been named in the narrative of Moses’ life in Midian; yet he has brought with him *sons* on this journey (v. 20). Only one son will be circumcised. This suggests to me that Moses’ first son had been circumcised (he is named previously in this book), but that his second son was not circumcised (and, therefore, was not named previously).

Exodus 4:24 **And it is, along [lit., in, upon] the way in the camp, that Y^ehowah met Moses [lit., him] and He sought to kill him.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Now, why would one son be circumcised but the other one not? Let me suggest that Zipporah, Moses’ wife, had refused to allow it, and, as a result, this child was not really considered by God up to this point as being a valid Hebrew child (as he did not represent regeneration). Only one son, Gershom (*stranger*) has been named (Exodus 2:21–22); and this chapter in v. 20 do we find out for the first time that Moses has more than one son.

What this means is, right now, Moses is going to Egypt to lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt; and yet he is traveling there with an uncircumcised son. That is very problematic.

One thing that ought to be clear to a believer with doctrine: when God seeks to kill someone, that would indicate the sin unto death. That is, God is going to remove Moses from this world based upon a sin, series of sins, or being out of fellowship for a lengthy period of time. Here, the reason appears to be, Moses has an uncircumcised son, and that he has allowed this by acceding to his wife's wishes. Now, this particular reason, based upon what we have studied so far, may seem to be far removed from the passage; but once we study the next two verses, then we will begin to accumulate the information which we know and then draw some conclusions.

When reading this, recall that the AEB is based upon the Greek text and the Greek text has *the angel of the Lord* in this passage.

The American English Bible on, *Did an Angel Want to Kill Moses?*

The words of Exodus 4:24 have long been a source of concern to most Bible students, because what is said in both the Hebrew and Greek texts is that an angel wanted to kill 'him' at an inn. And since the person mentioned in the preceding verse was Moses, we could logically conclude that he was the person whom the angel was planning to kill. Of course, this scenario is illogical, because God had just commissioned Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand that His people be set free. So, why would a messenger from God try to thwart God's plans?

The fact that a specific person isn't mentioned in this text allows that the 'him' spoken of here, wasn't Moses. Frequently, the Bible uses personal pronouns such as 'him' without disclosing which person is meant. And that's why you will often find names in brackets [] in this Bible... to clarify the name of the individual who is being spoken of by the use of a personal pronoun.

Note in this case, that the person who was spoken of in the following paragraph (in connection with this event) is Moses' son. For there we read that his mother apparently saved his life by circumcising him on the spot. Why was this important? Because God's instructions to AbraHam were that every Hebrew male was to be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. And since this obviously hadn't been done to Moses' son, he by law was to be put to death (see Genesis 17:14).

So the 'him' that was in danger of being killed by God's messenger was Moses' son, since God's Law had been violated by his not being circumcised.

Why hadn't Moses circumcised his son? We don't know, but the fact that his mother circumcised him likely indicates that she was the one to blame... and she knew it. Remember that her father is described as being 'the priest of Midian.' Thus he could have been a priest to a pagan god. And if so, this may have been the reason why she opposed the circumcision of her son.

Kukis: I would disagree with the AEB here. The woman may have opposed circumcision simply because she was unwilling to subject her son to that pain (better it be done when the child is eight days old, but that time is past).

Secondly, Moses' father-in-law is mentioned a significant number of times in Scripture. This would suggest to me that he is not just a believer in the Revealed God, but that he is a mature believer. This would explain why he and Moses got on so well, despite his daughter's reticence with Moses.

From http://www.2001translation.com/NOTES.htm#_53 accessed February 18, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

A son (or sons) of Moses has not been circumcised since birth. Now suddenly Moses is under the sin unto death. The sin unto death is a sin or sins or point of degeneracy when God requires the believer to be removed from this life painfully and under discipline. For the casual reader, the fact that God has come to Moses and has spoken to him on at least one occasion, and the fact that Moses finally decides to go along with God's plan, might become rather disconcerted by this verse. However, whereas Moses, a shepherd out in the desert, apart from his people, can get by with not circumcising his son(s); Moses, the leader of the Jewish people, the instrument of God, the man to stand before Pharaoh and demand Pharaoh allow the Jews to leave—that Moses does not have the

same leniency. As we move higher up in God's plan, we have more rewards, more happiness, more responsibility and the discipline becomes much more strict.

We have seen men of great spiritual prominence brought down by a few acts of carnality. These men do not even have to be spiritual giants; but they are perceived by many to have a great ministry and dedication to God. On the other hand, I can think of one man in particular who stands out as a very public person whose reputation is just about unimpeachable—Billy Graham. He has had a tremendous responsibility all of his life and, with God's grace, has been equal to the task. God sees that those who are leaders in the Christian community are disciplined far more than the average Christian would be.

Exodus 4:24 *And it came to pass that, while Moses was moving along the way and was in his camp, that Jehovah met Moses and decided to kill him.* (Kukis paraphrase)

And so takes Zipporah a flint [possibly, a knife] and so she cuts off a foreskin of her son and so she causes [it] to touch the ground towards his [two] feet, and so she says at that time, "A bridegroom of bloods you [are] to me."

Exodus
4:25

Zipporah took a [sharpened] flint and cut off the foreskin of her son. She causes [it] to touch the ground towards Moses' [lit., his] feet. Therefore, she said, at that time, "You [are] a bloody bridegroom to me."

In order to protect her husband, Zipporah took a sharpened flint and cut off the foreskin of her son. She threw it on the ground, near Moses' feet, saying, "You are a bloody husband to me."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so takes Zipporah a flint [possibly, a knife] and so she cuts off a foreskin of her son and so she causes [it] to touch the ground towards his [two] feet, and so she says at that time, "A bridegroom of bloods you [are] to me."
Dead Sea Scrolls	.
Targum of Onkelos	And Zipporah took a stone, and circumcised the foreskin of her son, and approached before him, and said, On account of the blood of this circumcision let my husband be given (back) to me.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Zipporah took a stone, and circumcised the foreskin of Gershom her son, and brought the severed part to the feet of the angel, the Destroyer, and said, The husband sought to circumcise, but the father-in-law obstructed him; and now let this blood of the circumcision atone for my husband. [JERUSALEM. And she circumcised the foreskin of her son, and brought before the feet of the Destroyer, and said, The husband could have circumcised, but the father-in-law did not permit him; but now, let the blood of this circumcision atone for the fault of this husband.] Immediately Sephora took a very sharp stone, and circumcised the fore skin of her son, and touched his feet and said: A bloody spouse art thou to me.
Revised Douay-Rheims	Then Zipporah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet; and she said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me."
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off the foreskin of her son, and she fell down at the feet of the LORD and said, I have a bloody husband.
Peshitta (Syriac)	and Sephora having taken a stone cut off the foreskin of her son, and fell at his feet and said, The blood of the circumcision of my son is staunchd:...
Septuagint (Greek)	.
Brenton's Septuagint	.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cutting off the skin of her son's private parts, and touching his feet with it, she said, Truly you are a husband of blood to me.
Easy English <i>The Message</i>	. On the journey back, as they camped for the night, God met Moses and would have killed him but Zipporah took a flint knife and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched Moses' member with it. She said, "Oh! You're a bridegroom of blood to me!" V. 24 is included for context.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	But Zipporah took a sharp-edged flint stone and cut off her son's foreskin. Then she touched Moses' genitals with it, and she said, "You are my bridegroom because of bloodshed."
Contemporary English V.	But Zipporah circumcised her son with a flint knife. She touched his legs with the skin she had cut off and said, "My dear son, this blood will protect you."
The Living Bible New Berkeley Version New Life Version	. . The Lord met Moses at a resting place on the way and would have put him to death. But Zipporah took a knife and cut off her son's piece of skin and threw it at Moses' feet. And she said, "For sure you are a husband of blood to me." V. 24 is included for context.
New Living Translation	But Moses' wife, Zipporah, took a flint knife and circumcised her son. She touched his feet with the foreskin and said, "Now you are a bridegroom of blood to me." (When she said "a bridegroom of blood," she was referring to the circumcision.) After that, the LORD left him alone. V. 26 is included for context.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	But SepPhoran grabbed a [sharp] stone and cut off her son's foreskin. Then she fell at his feet and said: 'See... the blood of my son's circumcision is flowing!'
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	. Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin, and touched Moses' [Lit. <i>his</i>] feet with it, saying while doing so [<i>Lit. touched to his feet</i>], "...because you are a bridegroom of blood to me."
New Advent (Knox) Bible Translation for Translators	. Then <i>his/my wife</i> Zipporah took a flint knife and circumcised her son. Then she touched the boy's feet (OR, genitals) with the piece of skin <i>she had cut off</i> , and she said, "The blood <i>which flowed when I circumcised you</i> will protect you <i>from being harmed by Yahweh</i> [MET]."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Zipporah was to take a sharp stone, and was to cut off the foreskin of her son, and was to strike his feet with it. She was to say: You is a son-in-law of blood.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible God's Truth (Tyndale)	. Then Zepora took a stone and circumcised her son, and fell at his feet, and said: a bloody husband are you unto me.
Lexham English Bible	But Zipporah took a flint [knife], and she cut off the foreskin of her son, and she touched his feet, and she said, "Yes, you [are] a bridegroom of blood to me."
NIV, ©2011	But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it. "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me," she said.

Urim-Thummim Version	But Zipporah took a flint knife and cut off the foreskin of her son, and touched it to Moses' feet and said, surely a husband of blood [rites] are you to me!
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Zipporah took a flint, and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched it to his feet, and said, "for a blood groom you are to me".

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	But Zipporah took a flint stone and cut her son's fore skin and, with it, she touched the feet of Moses saying, "You are now my husband by blood!"
New American Bible (2002)	But Zipporah took a piece of flint and cut off her son's foreskin and, touching his person, she said, "You are a spouse of blood to me."
New American Bible (2011)	But Zipporah took a piece of flint and cut off her son's foreskin and, touching his feet [Touching his feet: a euphemism most probably for the male sexual organ (see 2 Kgs 18:27; Is 7:20); whether the genitals of the child (after Zipporah circumcised him) or of Moses (after the circumcision of his son) is not clear.], she said, "Surely you are a spouse of blood to me." Is 6:2; 7:20.
New Jerusalem Bible	Then Zipporah, taking up a flint, cut off her son's foreskin and with it touched his feet and said, 'You are my blood-bridegroom!'
Revised English Bible	On the journey, while they were encamped for the night, the LORD met Moses and would have killed him, but Zipporah picked up a sharp flint, cut off her son's foreskin, and touched Moses' genitals with it, saying, "You are my blood-bridegroom." V. 24 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	Then Sipporah takes a sharp stone and cuts off the foreskin of her son, so that it touches his feet and says, Surely a bloody groom are you to me.
Hebraic Roots Bible	And Zipporah took a stone and cut off her son's foreskin, and caused it to touch his feet. And she said, You are a bridegroom of blood to me.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	So Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched his legs with it, saying, "You are truly a bridegroom of blood to me!"
Kaplan Translation	Tzipporah took a stone knife and cut off her son's foreskin, throwing it down at [Moses'] feet. 'As far as I am concerned, you're married to blood, she said [to the child].

her son's Some say that it was her newborn son Eliezer (Sh'moth Rabbah, Rashi; Ibn Ezra). According to others, it was the older son, Gershom, who was not yet circumcised (Targum Yonathan; Sefer HaYashar).

throwing it down (Rashi). Literally, 'touching;' see note, this verse 'Moses' feet.'

Moses' feet (Rashi; Rashbam; Ibn Ezra). In the Talmud, one opinion is that it was at Moses' feet, another that it was at the child's feet, and a third, that it was at the feet of the angel who wanted to kill him (Yerushalmi, Nedarim 3:9). Others have, 'the blood ran down [the child's] feet' (Ralbag); or, 'She peeled back [the foreskin] toward his legs' (Malbim).

married Literally, 'a bridegroom of blood.' Some interpret the Hebrew word chathan here to denote a newly circumcised child (Ibn Ezra), because the child is being initiated into new joy (Radak, Sherashim).

to blood Or, 'you are like a murderer to me' (Ibn Ezra; Radak; Sherashim; Tur); 'you are the murderer of my husband' (Rashi); or 'You are bleeding so much' (Ralbag). According to the opinion that she was addressing Moses (see note, this verse, 'to the child'), she said, 'Through this bloody child you will remain mine [and live]' (Rashbam; Targum Yonathan); or, 'Your marriage to me requires this blood'

(Sforno; Chizzkuni; Tur; cf. Targum). Or, 'the circumcision blood of [my son] is staunched' (Septuagint).

to the child In the Talmud there is a debate as to whether she was addressing Moses or the child (Yerushalmi, Nedarim 3:9).

Orthodox Jewish Bible

Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the arlat ben (foreskin of son) of her, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a choson damim (a bridegroom of blood) art thou to me.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible

But Zipporah took a flint knife and circumcised [^Lcut the foreskin of] her son. Taking the skin, she touched Moses' feet [^Ca euphemism for his genitalia] with it and said to him, "You are a bridegroom of blood to me."

Kretzmann's Commentary

Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, a stone knife, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, laid it down so that it touched the feet of Moses, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. The entire incident seems to have been a source of great displeasure to Zipporah, and her words indicate that she considered her husband regained by the blood of her child.

NET Bible®

But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off the foreskin of her son and touched it to Moses' feet [*Heb* "to his feet." The referent (Moses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.], and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood⁷⁹ to me."

Syndein/Thieme

Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, "Surely a bloody husband are you to me." {Note: Apparently Moses told his Arab wife that if she did not circumcise their son God would take his life. So, his wife reluctantly agreed to circumcise their son, but she is 'divorcing' him over the incident. This is an idiom. She is saying that Moses is now 'dead to her'.}

The Voice

While on their way to Egypt, they stopped at a place to rest. But the Eternal met Moses, and it seemed like He was about to kill him, when Zipporah grabbed a flint knife and quickly cut off her son's foreskin. She dropped it at Moses' feet.

Zipporah: Certainly you are a bridegroom of blood to me. V. 24 is included for context.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.

...and "Tsiporah ^{Bird}" took a sharp stone and she cut the foreskin of her son, and she touched it to his feet, and she said, given that you are an in-law of / to me,...

Concordant Literal Version

So Zipporah took a chert knife and cut off the foreskin of her son and touched it to his feet and said: Because one of bloody affinity are you to me.

Emphasized Bible

So Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it down at his feet,—and said—Surely, a bridegroom by rites of blood, art thou to me!

English Standard Version

Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!"

Green's Literal Translation

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Modern English Version

Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and threw it at his feet, and said, "Surely a bloody husband are you to me."

Stuart Wolf

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Webster's Bible Translation

Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.

Young's Updated LT

And Zipporah takes a flint, and cuts off the foreskin of her son, and causes it to touch his feet, and says, "Surely a bridegroom of blood are you to me."

The gist of this passage:

Zipporah, Moses' wife, she circumcises their son.

Exodus 4:25a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
Tsippôrâh (צִיפּוֹרָה) [pronounced <i>tsihp-poh-RAW</i>]	<i>bird</i> and is transliterated <i>Zipporah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #6855 BDB #862
tsôr (צֹר) [pronounced <i>tsohr</i>]	<i>flint, hard pebble, rock; knife</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6864 BDB #862

Also spelled tsôwr (צוֹר) [pronounced *tsohr*], and is identical to Strong's #6865 (which is transliterated *Tyre, Tyrus*).

Translation: [Zipporah took a \[sharpened\] flint...](#)

Since I am the kind of guy who has grown up around tools for most of my life, not really appreciating them until later in life, I have personal interest in the statements in the Word of God as they relate to tools. It is unclear whether this refers to a sharpened flint or to an actual knife.

Although we have determined that knives were found very early in human culture, that does not mean that they are found everywhere, in every human grouping.

Exodus 4:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kâraḥ (כָּרַח) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAHTH</i>]	<i>to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to make a covenant</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'or ^e lâh (הֲלֹרֵעַ) [pronounced <i>gohr^e-LAW</i>]	<i>foreskin (uncircumcised); foreskin of a tree [fruit from the tree for the first 3 years]</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #6190 BDB #790
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: ...and cut off the foreskin of her son.

We are not given any reason for this. We must assume that Moses somehow understood what was happening, and told her to circumcise their son. It is possible that Moses was very ill and unable to do anything at this time, and that he realized what the problem was.

They appear to have two sons (at least), although only one son is named and this circumcision refers only to one son. There may be a reason for this.

Foreskin, surprisingly enough, is a feminine noun. *Cast down* is in the Hiphil stem—the passive stem—and it is in the feminine singular. This is how we properly determine the subject of this verb.

Exodus 4:25a-b **Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son...** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

This short passage deals with circumcision. Recall that circumcision refers to regeneration or giving new life to that which was dead. We are born into this world physically alive but spiritually dead. That is, we have no natural contact with God. Now, through our own thinking, we might think things about God, but we have no direct contact until we have believed in Jesus Christ (in the Old Testament, they believed in the Revealed God, the Preincarnate Messiah/King). Circumcision, although done usually on the 8th day of life, represents this new life which comes through faith in the Revealed God. Circumcision is a representative analogy, and is clearly required by God of all Hebrew males.

Hebrew children would be brought up, in varying degrees, with some sort of knowledge of their God; and when they choose to believe in that God, they are reborn (or born again). This means that, they now have a human spirit (or, more accurately, their human spirit has become activated). Before the human spirit had no function or there was no way to access it; but after salvation, the human spirit is where spiritual information is stored. Just as we store information about people and things in our soul; we store information about God, about the Angelic Conflict, and about God's plan in our spirits. However, we must be born again unto God in order for this to happen. Additionally, we must be in fellowship. The human spirit is not available to us if we have unconfessed sin in our lives. (This is why every church service ought to begin with the opportunity for the parishioners to silently name their sins to God.)

Exodus 4:25c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgâ' (נָגַע) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHG</i>]	<i>to cause to touch, to cause to touch [the ground—i.e., to destroy], to touch, to reach [to anything—when followed by a lâmed], to come to [when followed by 'el], to attain to [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5060 BDB #619
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Exodus 4:25c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rag ^l layim (רַגְלַיִם) [pronounced RAHG-lah-yim]	feet, [two] feet; metaphorically for steps taken in one's life	feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7272 BDB #919

The NET Bible: *The LXX has "and she fell at his feet" and then "the blood of the circumcision of my son stood." But it is clear that she caused the foreskin to touch Moses' feet, as if the one were a substitution for the other, taking the place of the other (see U. Cassuto, Exodus, 60).*⁷¹

Translation: She causes [it] to touch the ground towards Moses' [lit., his] feet.

I believe that she only circumcised the second son (who had not been circumcised). It says that she threw the foreskin on the ground towards *his feet*. Most understand this to be *Moses' feet* (as opposed to the son's feet) because what she says next is directed towards him; and this is clearly related to the sin unto death.

Exodus 4:25d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
châthân (חָתָן) [pronounced khaw-THAWN]	son-in-law, a daughter's husband, a bridegroom, husband	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2860 BDB #368
dâmîym (דָּמַיִם) [pronounced daw-MEEM]	blood; bloodshed; a bloody [man]; a slaying; guilt of a slaughter	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1818 BDB #196
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	you (often, the verb to be is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^o]	to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: Therefore, she said, at that time, "You [are] a bloody bridegroom to me."

⁷¹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

This really upset Zipporah and she did not understand the reason for this, or the requirements of the God of Moses (and the God of her father).

Women do not like to see their children suffer any kind of pain, no matter what. Sometimes a child is so protected from pain, that they have no concept of what the real world is like and they have totally unrealistic expectations. Zipporah is practically never mentioned in the Bible, and she is never mentioned with regards to any great spiritual thing. Moses' life was at stake and she was concerned about a small amount of pain. She has no big picture view. She has no concept of Moses' role in history. In order for two people to have a happy life together, they need to both be growing spiritually. We may not know the full implication of what she has said, but it is clear that she is unhappy with the situation and any husband knows that there is hell to pay when the little woman is unhappy (this works both ways).

The NET Bible: *U. Cassuto explains that she was saying, "I have delivered you from death, and your return to life makes you my bridegroom a second time, this time my blood bridegroom, a bridegroom acquired through blood" (Exodus, 60-61).*⁷²

Exodus 4:25 Zipporah took a [sharpened] flint and cut off the foreskin of her son. She causes [it] to touch the ground towards Moses' [lit., his] feet. Therefore, she said, at that time, "You [are] a bloody bridegroom to me." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Moses' wife, Zipporah, appears to be none too happy with circumcising her sons. Some people have great difficulty with the idea of circumcision (I believe that some cities have even **tried to outlaw it**).

Circumcision marks God's people; it was a sign of new life, which began with Abraham.⁷³ Abraham was sexually dead; he was incapable of reproducing in his old age, and yet, he did not have the son that God had promised him. God required him to be circumcised and that gave Moses new life (metaphorically speaking). After the circumcision, Moses was potent and able to father children. So circumcision represents having new life given by God (so much of what we study in the Old Testament is representative of spiritual truths).

For more information, see the doctrine of **circumcision** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Exodus 4:25 In order to protect her husband, Zipporah took a sharpened flint and cut off the foreskin of her son. She threw it on the ground, near Moses' feet, saying, "You are a bloody husband to me." (Kukis paraphrase)

What appears to be the case is, Moses or Zipporah circumcised the first boy—I suspect that Moses made Zipporah do it—and Zipporah was so upset over it, she refused to allow the circumcision of the second son. That would explain why one son was circumcised but the other was not. However, it is the uncircumcised son that kept them from moving forward.

So Zipporah circumcises the younger son and she casts the foreskin at Moses' feet.

It is reasonable to suppose that this entire thing, where Zipporah has been uprooted and is now traveling with Moses to a place that she has never been—separated from her family, a way of life she has known her entire life—this is quite a jarring experience for her. She may be mad about the circumcision, but I suspect that she is upset about a great many things at this point.

Furthermore, we do not know how much Zipporah knows about what is happening. Does she simply think that Moses is going to look up some of his old buddies in Egypt? Does she know anything about God speaking to him? Therefore, it is logical that Zipporah is upset about a lot of things right at this moment; as she is clearly a very headstrong woman.

⁷² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

⁷³ Certainly men were saved prior to Abraham; and he was saved long before he was circumcised.

If Moses has not told Jethro the real reason that he is going to Egypt, what exactly has he told his wife? How much does she know at this point in time? If anyone is difficult to deal with, it is Moses' wife. She does not want to be on this trip going to Egypt—and I doubt that she has any idea why Moses has been so insistent on going. And, quite obviously, she is not happy with this whole circumcision thing.

I suspect Moses' way of dealing with his wife was not to tell her why exactly they were going to Egypt. I believe that he told her the same things that he told her father. So she did not have the full and complete picture.

Exodus 4:25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!" (NKJV)

Moses was fully aware of this requirement of circumcision, yet he apparently did not push it when his second son came along. My guess is, considering the response of Zipporah, it was just not worth the trouble. How long would she nag and trouble him after this second circumcision? He weighed his options and went with not circumcising this second son.

However, now Moses is about to lead all Israel, but how can he do that if he cannot lead this one woman? No one was moving forward on God's plan or God's covenant until all of the males were circumcised (compare Joshua 7). Remember that circumcision was a sign of God's covenant (Genesis 17:12–14).

God fell upon Moses, or met Moses with the intention of killing him. Because Moses had not circumcised youngest son, and was off to lead the nation Israel out of Egypt, he found himself under the sin unto death. He delegated the responsibility of circumcising the children to his wife (it is possible that he was too sick to perform this operation—again, God has not given us all the details here). Once she had done that, God allowed Moses to recover (*He withdrew from him*) and Zipporah was allowed her moment of bitchiness. How embarrassing to have a husband who is the single greatest man in the Old Testament and the only thing that we remember about the wife is how pouted and bitched in the face of God's plan and the possibility of the death of her husband. What a sad memorial. We must understand that this is not an indictment against all women; this is a sad piece of commentary about one woman who did not have the foresight, the **spiritual growth**, the **personal sense of destiny** that her husband possessed.

And so He withdrew from him; then she had said, "A bridegroom of bloods" regarding the circumcisions.

Exodus
4:26

Consequently, God [lit., He] withdrew from Moses [lit., him]; [and] then she said, "A bloody bridegroom" regarding the circumcisions.

Consequently, after the circumcision, God withdrew his hand from Moses; after which she said, "You are a bloody husband to me" regarding the circumcisions.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so He withdrew from him; then she had said, "A bridegroom of bloods" regarding the circumcisions.

Dead Sea Scrolls

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Targum of Onkelos

And when he had desisted from him, she said, But for the blood of this circumcision my husband would have been condemned to die.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And the destroying angel desisted from him, so that Zipporah gave thanks, and said, How lovely is the blood of this circumcision that bath delivered my husband from the angel of destruction! [JERUSALEM. And when the Destroyer had ceased

Revised Douay-Rheims	from him, Zipporah gave thanks and said, How lovely is the blood of this circumcision which hath saved my husband from the hand of the angel of death !] And he let him go after she had said A bloody spouse art thou to me, because of the circumcision.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	So he let him alone. Then she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.
Peshitta (Syriac)	So the LORD let him go. Then she said, You are a bloody husband, because of the circumcision.
Septuagint (Greek)	...and he departed from him, because she said, The blood of the circumcision of my son is staunched.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Easy English	<p>On the way to Egypt, there was a house where people can rest on their journey. God met Moses there and God was going to kill him. But Zipporah took a sharp stone and she cut off her son's foreskin with the stone. Then Zipporah threw the foreskin at Moses' feet. She said: 'You are a husband of blood to me.' So God did not do anything bad to Moses. Then Zipporah said to Moses: 'You are a husband of blood, because of this circumcision.' Vv. 24–25 are included for context.</p> <p>A long time before this, God had told Abraham that he must circumcise himself and every male person in his house. All the men that would be born into that family must obey this command. This was the sign of God's promise to Abraham and his family. Because Moses had not circumcised his son, he had not obeyed God's command. Zipporah circumcised their son because God would have killed Moses. Because she obeyed God, Moses did not die. It is very important to obey God.</p>
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Then she said to Moses, "You are a bridegroom of blood to me." Zipporah said this because she had to circumcise her son. So God let Moses live. A portion of v. 25 is included for context.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Because of the rite of circumcision she said to Moses, "You are a husband of blood to me." And so the Lord spared Moses' life.
International Children's B.	Zipporah said this because she had to circumcise her son. So the Lord did not kill Moses.
<i>The Message</i>	Then GOD let him go. She used the phrase "bridegroom of blood" because of the circumcision.
NIRV	On the way to Egypt, Moses stopped for the night. There the Lord met him and was about to kill him. But Zipporah got a knife made out of flint. She circumcised her son with it. Then she touched Moses' feet with the skin she had cut off. "Surely, you are a husband who has forced me to spill my son's blood," she said. So the Lord didn't kill Moses. When she said "husband who has forced me to spill my son's blood," she was talking about circumcision. Vv. 24–25 are included for context.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	So the LORD let him alone. At that time, she announced, "A bridegroom because of bloodshed by circumcision."
Contemporary English V.	So the LORD did not harm Moses. Then Zipporah said, "Yes, my dear, you are safe because of this circumcision."
The Living Bible	As Moses and his family were traveling along and had stopped for the night, Jehovah appeared to Moses and threatened to kill him. Then Zipporah his wife took a flint knife and cut off the foreskin of her young son's penis, and threw it against

Moses' feet, remarking disgustedly, "What a blood-smearred husband you've turned out to be!"

Then God left him alone. Vv. 24–25 are included for context.

New Berkeley Version
New Century Version

She said, "You are a bridegroom of blood," because she had to circumcise her son. So the LORD let Moses alone.

New Life Version

Then the Lord let him alone. Zipporah said, "You are a husband of blood," because of the religious act of becoming a Jew.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible
Beck's American Translation
International Standard V

So because she said, 'The blood of my son's circumcision is flowing,' he left.

Then the LORD [Lit. *Then he*] withdrew from him, and she said, "...a bridegroom of blood because of circumcision."

New Advent (Knox) Bible

And as she said the words, Betrothed in blood, after the circumcision, the Lord consented to spare him. Apparently, in marrying a foreign wife, Moses had culpably neglected the duty of circumcising his first-born (Gen. 17.10); the part played by his wife is easier to understand, if we suppose that Moses himself was prostrated by some sudden illness. It is hard to know whether the juxtaposition of this passage with verses 22 and 23 is or is not intentional.

Translation for Translators

She said to him, "You are safe now [MET] because you have been circumcised." So Yahweh did not harm her son.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible
Conservapedia

He was to refrain. She was to say: You is a son-in-law of the blood of circumcision. And so she slacked off from him, saying, "You are a bridegroom of blood to me," on account of the circumcision. Moses and Zipporah had their first "spat", that would last until the Red Sea crossing.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible
NIV, ©2011

So he retired from them, when she said, "It is a marriage circumcision." So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she said "bridegroom of blood," referring to circumcision.)

Tree of Life Version

She said, "A bridegroom of blood" because of the circumcision. Then He let him alone.

Urim-Thummim Version

So He let him go, then she repeated, a husband of blood [rites] are you to me, with regards to the rites of circumcision.

Wikipedia Bible Project

And he backed off him, then she said "blood groom", to the circumcision.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)

And the Angel left him. Zipporah said 'husband by blood' because of the circumcision.

The Heritage Bible

And Zipporah took a stone knife, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and touched his feet, and said, Because of a child of circumcision you are bloody to me. And he slacked off from him; she said at that time, A circumcised child of blood, on account of the circumcision. V. 25 is included for context.

4:25-26 the word for **child of circumcision** is chathan, and means any male who becomes a relative by circumcision; that is, before any man could marry a Hebrew woman, he had to be circumcised. Any man that was considered a bridegroom or son-in-law had to be circumcised. Any man who came into that position was called a child or a son of circumcision. The child when circumcised at 8 days of age was called a child of circumcision. Chathan in these two verses refers to the child circumcised, not to Moses. Zipporah considered it a barbaric practice; she

considered it bloody, and said so, not spiritually discerning its true religious significance. ...**touched his feet**, refers to Moses. Zipporah touched the circumcised skin to the feet of Moses who was lying on his bed under attack from Jehovah God for not yet circumcising apparently the youngest child, no doubt because of the objections of his wife. ...**he slacked off from him** refers to God's ceasing his threat to kill Moses since he had now obeyed the law of circumcision.

New American Bible (2002)	Then God let Moses go. At that time she said, "A spouse of blood," in regard to the circumcision.
New Jerusalem Bible	So he let him go. She said, 'Blood-bridegroom' then, with reference to the circumcision.
New RSV	So he let him alone. It was then she said, 'A bridegroom of blood by circumcision.'
Revised English Bible	So the LORD let Moses alone. It was on that occasion she said, "Blood-bridegroom by circumcision."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	But then, God let Moshe be. She added, "A bloody bridegroom because of the circumcision!"
exeGesés companion Bible	...- and he sends him away. Then she says, A bloody groom, because of the circumcision.
Hebraic Roots Bible	And He pulled back from him. Then she said, A bridegroom of blood, for the circumcision.
Kaplan Translation	[God] then spared [Moses]. '[You were] married to blood because of circumcision,' she said.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	So He let him go; then she said, A choson damim thou art, because of the circumcision (<i>i.e.</i> , [<i>bris</i>] <i>milah</i>).

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So He let Moses alone [to recover]. At that time Zipporah said, "You are a husband of blood"—because of the circumcision.
The Expanded Bible	She said, "You are a bridegroom of blood," because she had to circumcise her son [by circumcision]. So the Lord let Moses alone [this event is difficult to interpret, but shows that circumcision is important to God].
Kretzmann's Commentary	So He let him go. Then she said, A bloody husband, or bridegroom, thou art, because of the circumcision. She vented her displeasure after the recovery of Moses was assured. It seems that this incident caused Moses to reconsider his intention of taking his family along to Egypt. At any rate, it was not until his return to the peninsula of Sinai that his father-in-law brought his family to him, Exodus 18:2. As circumcision was a sacrament in the Old Testament, so Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, and the Lord's zeal for the use of the means of grace is as great as ever.
NET Bible®	So the Lord [<i>Heb</i> "he"; the referent (the Lord) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] let him alone. (At that time [Or "Therefore."] she said, "A bridegroom of blood," referring to the circumcision.)
The Voice	So the Eternal released Moses <i>from this offense</i> . When Zipporah made the remark, "a bridegroom of blood," she was talking about the circumcision.

This strange episode is difficult to understand. There is much here that is unexplainable. What is clear is that Moses has been called by God to challenge Pharaoh—one of the most powerful men in history—and to rescue hundreds of thousands of Hebrew slaves from lives of hard labor. On a human level, at least, this seems like risky business. But Moses' mission is something else entirely; it is God's business, involving promises made by a holy God to Abraham hundreds of

years earlier, promises to provide for and protect His people. One key aspect of that covenant is the obligation of all males to be circumcised. Apparently Moses has neglected to circumcise his son, a fact that could jeopardize the entire mission. So when Zipporah realizes the gravity of the situation, she takes action and circumcises him. With their covenant responsibilities now met, Moses is free to continue the mission.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and he sunk down from him, at that time she said, an in-law of / (for) the circumcisions,...
Concordant Literal Version	And he slacked off from him. Then it was that she said, blood affinity, referring to circumcisions.
English Standard Version	So he let him alone. It was then that she said, "A bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.
Green's Literal Translation	And He pulled back from him. Then she said, A bridegroom of blood, for the circumcision.
NASB	So He let him alone. At that time she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood"—because of the circumcision.
Stuart Wolf	.
Webster's Bible Translation	So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband <i>thou art</i> , because of the circumcision.
Young's Updated LT	And He desists from him: then she said, "A bridegroom of blood," in reference to the circumcision.

The gist of this passage: Moses' wife calls him a *bridegroom of blood* because of the circumcision. God pulls back on the discipline to Moses.

Exodus 4:26a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râphâh (רָפָה) [pronounced raw-FAW]	<i>to sink, to relax, to loosen and let drop, to let down, to cast down, to let fall, to withdraw, to abate</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7503 BDB #951
min (מִן) [pronounced mihn]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

Translation: Consequently, God [lit., He] withdrew from Moses [lit., him];...

God was going to kill Moses; he was about to die the sin unto death; and then his wife stepped in—probably as instructed by Moses—and she circumcised the youngest son.

Exodus 4:26a So He let him go.

The translation, *So He let him go* might be difficult to understand. A more literal rendering would be *Consequently, God [lit., He] withdrew from Moses [lit., him];...* God's pressure on Moses had been tremendous. Moses was under the sin unto death; and, as soon as his son had been circumcised, God backed off. It was Moses' responsibility to see to it that all of his male sons were circumcised, and he apparently failed in this regard. The fact that Zipporah reluctantly circumcises their second son, but it not very happy about it, suggests that she is the reason that he was not circumcised in the first place. However, as head of the household, Moses is the one responsible for this (that is, the sin unto death was placed upon him and not upon Zipporah).

Exodus 4:26b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âz (אז) [pronounced awz]	<i>then, after that, at that time, in that case (when following an if or though), now, as things are; that being so, therefore, because of that</i>	adverb	Strong's #227 BDB #23
The NET Bible: Or "Therefore." The particle אַז ('az) here is not introducing the next item in a series of events. It points back to the past ("at that time," see Gen 4:26) or to a logical connection ("therefore, consequently"). ⁷⁴			
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
châthân (חתן) [pronounced khaw-THAWN]	<i>son-in-law, a daughter's husband, a bridegroom, husband</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2860 BDB #368
dâmîym (דמים) [pronounced daw-MEEM]	<i>blood; bloodshed; a bloody [man]; a slaying; guilt of a slaughter</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1818 BDB #196
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to; belonging to; by</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mûwlôth (מולות) [pronounced mwu-LOHTH]	<i>circumcisions</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4139 BDB #558

⁷⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

Exodus 4:26b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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The NET Bible: *The Hebrew simply has תלומל (lammulot, "to the circumcision[s]"). The phrase explains that the saying was in reference to the act of circumcision. Some scholars speculate that there was a ritual prior to marriage from which this event and its meaning derived. But it appears rather that if there was some ancient ritual, it would have had to come from this event. The difficulty is that the son is circumcised, not Moses, making the comparative mythological view untenable. Moses had apparently not circumcised Eliezer. Since Moses was taking his family with him, God had to make sure the sign of the covenant was kept. It may be that here Moses sent them all back to Jethro (18:2) because of the difficulties that lay ahead.⁷⁵*

Translation: ...[and] then she said, "A bloody bridegroom" regarding the circumcisions.

It was after God withdrew from Moses that she said, "You are a bloody husband" to Moses, regarding the circumcisions (plural).

Exodus 4:26b Then she said, "You are a husband of blood!"—because of the circumcision. (NKJV)

One thing that Moses remembers very well from this incident is his wife calls him, "A husband of blood." This is stated in v. 25 and 26. Let me suggest that she is expressing both anger and frustration towards him; and it is possible that she said it more than once. Right after the circumcision, she probably said those words—and then, when Moses began to recover, she may have said those words again, just to make sure that he heard her.

With his sons now both circumcised, God lets Moses proceed towards Egypt. Nevertheless, his wife is apparently livid over the circumcision and probably because of the circumstances of them leaving Midian, her home.

Exodus 4:26 Consequently, God [lit., He] withdrew from Moses [lit., him]; [and] then she said, "A bloody bridegroom" regarding the circumcisions. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Zipporah was under a lot of pressure here. She was raised with her family out in the desert and for the past forty or so years has lived with Moses in the desert. She certainly assumed they would live out there lives together there, so she is certainly unhappy about this trip to Egypt. Even though it is unlikely that Moses has told anyone as to why he is really going to Egypt, it is certain that she suspects that this is more than just a family reunion. This circumcision is the last straw. She had thought that this issue had been settled. She had raised her children under Dr. Spock, seeing that they experience little or no pain in their lives, therefore, she would not allow circumcision to be done; and now she has found that she has been overruled. All in all, a bad day for Zipporah (which means *bird*).

This issue of complete obedience was obviously of utmost importance to God. It was important enough to put Moses under the sin unto death. He was given enough time to deal with this situation properly as the man of the house, and he did. Zipporah, just in case Moses didn't hear her the first time or receive the entire impact of her statement, she calls him a bloody bridegroom twice. Because of Zipporah's failure here, we will never hear about her again. One theologian theorized that she left Moses at this time.

Exodus 4:26 Consequently, after the circumcision, God withdrew his hand from Moses; after which she said, "You are a bloody husband to me" regarding the circumcisions. (Kukis paraphrase)

It says that she circumcised a son (not sons). However, she speaks of the *circumcisions* here.

⁷⁵ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 18, 2017.

Circumcision or Circumcisions?

1. In v. 25, Zipporah circumcises one son.
2. In v. 26, she seems to be upset about the circumcisions. How do we explain that?
3. Let me suggest that Moses insisted on the circumcision of their first child, and she agreed to it, until she saw it performed.
4. When they had their second child, Zipporah she refused to allow their second child to be circumcised.
5. Even though we have sons (plural) that Moses places on the donkey (v. 20), only one son is named (Exodus 2:21–22).
6. Let me suggest that the first son is named because he was circumcised; the second is not mentioned specifically by name, as he was not.
7. This approach is consistent with all that we have studied and explains Zipporah circumcising one child; but she was complaining about *circumcisions* (as she had to circumcise both sons).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The emphasis upon the exact timing is interesting, and I do not know exactly why there is an emphasis in the text like this.

Exodus 4:24–26 At a lodging place on the way the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" So He let him alone. It was then that she said, "A bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision. (ESV; capitalized)

I would like to separate what we actually know from logical speculation.

What Do We Know About the Circumcision Incident?

1. *Son* is in the singular, so it appears that only one son had been circumcised and the other was not. Exodus 4:25
2. As the father, Moses would have been aware of this from the very beginning. It would be virtually impossible for a father to have a son and not know whether or not he was circumcised.
3. Zipporah does the circumcision on the second son. Exodus 4:25
4. Moses does not say anything (or, whatever he says is not recorded); but the one comment is made by Zipporah, which is said in v. 25 and partially repeated in v. 26. **"Surely you are a husband of blood to me!"** It is possible that she repeats this phrase herself. Exodus 4:25–26
5. This remark seems to indicate that Zipporah is upset by this incident, and particularly about having to circumcise her son.
6. She says this as she throws the foreskin at Moses' feet. This is the sort of thing a person would do who is making a statement, like, "So, this is what you want? This is what I had to do?" Zipporah seems very angry over what she had to do.
7. The circumcision of the child appears to be directly related to Moses' illness (or his being put under the sin unto death).
8. It appears that Moses' life is in danger from God (v. 24), but that after the circumcision, God lets up on Moses (v. 26).
9. The believer's life, when in danger directly from God, is known as the threat of the sin unto death. We have incidents in the Bible where a believer appears to be dying the sin unto death and others where they die the sin unto death.

Now, let's consider and talk about these things that we know:

If I were to make an educated guess, Zipporah was the one who refused to circumcise their second son in the first place, after witnessing (or doing) the circumcision of their first son. Moses very likely did not exert his God-given authority as her husband but simply let her have her way regarding the second son. Therefore, God would strike Moses with an illness so that he cannot do this for her. Since Moses did not exert his authority as husband, God does it for him.

We need to be flexible in the nonessentials, and inflexible in the essentials, as R. B. Thieme, Jr. said many times. Moses, as the husband, is not a drill sergeant. He was not to tell his wife what to do in each and every instance of their lives. However, when it comes to the essentials—which includes circumcision for their sons—Moses was to be inflexible. This was a requirement of God for Moses as a Hebrew father. Here, he failed.

Moses is given divine authority from God. He must know how to wield this authority. If he is unable to assert his authority with his own wife, how can he possibly stand before Pharaoh and lay down the law? How can he stand before Israel and tell them what must be done?

Zipporah seems to be a rather difficult woman, the few times that we encounter her in the Word of God. Moses' 40+ year marriage to her was probably preparation for him to lead the people of Israel. At a much later time, in the desert, after the people of Israel have committed another round of sins indicating their negative volition, God comes to Moses and says, "I am ready to start all over again. I will kill every single Israelite and start over again with your sons."

You or I, had we put up with some of the nonsense that Moses did, might have responded, "That sounds like a great plan, God. I like that idea." But Moses won't do this; he will intercede for the people of Israel (just as Jesus has done on our behalf). I have little doubt that being married to a woman as difficult as Zipporah helped to prepare Moses to respond appropriately (or, to put this another way, killing your wife is *not* the solution to any of your marriage problems).

So there is no misunderstanding, circumcision was performed in the Hebrew economy because it represented regeneration, bringing life out of death. It has no spiritual meaning today. It is not wrong or right to have your children circumcised today. Circumcision does appear to be common in western society particularly of Christian cultures. Again, it is not wrong or right for a Christian to choose to circumcise his sons.

I will try to take all that we know and weave it into a logical, reasonable narrative, which is consistent with the narrative before us.

Kukis' Full Interpretation of the Circumcision Incident

1. Zipporah had two sons of Moses, one who is circumcised and named in Scripture and the other son, whose birth is not mentioned (Exodus 2:22 18:3). This second son was not circumcised (Exodus 4:25). Being uncircumcised, he is not recognized by God; and so he is not mentioned in Scripture until this point.
2. The fact that one child is circumcised suggests that Moses knew enough about his history as a Hebrew man to require his son to be circumcised.
3. I would guess that Zipporah put her foot down with the second child and said, "We will not circumcise this boy! That is a bloody ceremony which I refuse to allow our son to go through. Nor will I ever take part in doing such a thing!"
4. In the alternative, she puts her foot down and tells Moses that he will not circumcise the second son. We do not have this quote in Scripture and we have no idea who performed the first circumcision. I have simply made an educated guess at this point.
5. Given that circumstances for Zipporah to perform the circumcision in this chapter, that would certainly suggest that she is the one at fault for the second son not being circumcised.
6. Moses, when Zipporah originally indicated that she did not want their second son circumcised, decided that this is a battle that he does not really want to have; and he backed off. He was flexible with regards to an essential. Circumcising his child is not an optional matter for any Old Testament Hebrew father.
7. The Midian family which has adopted Moses apparently did not circumcise their young. They are

Kukis' Full Interpretation of the Circumcision Incident

- believers but they are not Hebrews. Also, Moses' father-in-law appears to have only had daughters. Baby girls are not circumcised. *That* is a heathen ritual.
8. Then God speaks to Moses and, as a result, Moses and his wife and his sons then travel toward Egypt.
 9. Early on, God stops this procession, and Moses is placed under the sin unto death, because the one son is not circumcised. God will not allow incomplete obedience from Moses. We do not know the nature of what was happening to Moses, but let me suggest a deadly illness which appeared certain to kill him.
 10. I would suggest an illness which has knocked Moses on his back, making him unable to do much of anything except talk.
 11. Moses was probably so ill as to not have a full and complete memory of this incident; and that he himself was too weak to perform the circumcision. He only had enough strength to tell his wife that she must circumcise the second son or he, Moses, would die. Whether he said this once or several times, we do not know. That he said this at all is also an educated guess.
 12. Moses, being too weak from the illness, cannot circumcise the boy. Zipporah must do it. My guess here is, God is making her circumcise the boy because she is the one who refused the procedure earlier. All that we know for certain, at this point, is that Zipporah performs the circumcision.
 13. Moses being weak with sickness, suffering the sin unto death, would have been responsible for this narrative, which is threadbare. What is recorded is almost less than what is needed to understand what is going on.
 14. Zipporah is angry about all of this, but she still does the circumcision. She throws the foreskin at the feet of her sickly husband, remarking, "**You are a bloody bridegroom, you are!**" I suspect that Moses is lying there sick before her (he is not standing).
 15. God removes the discipline from Moses, and he recovers. Had the son not been circumcised, Moses would have died the sin unto death.
 16. They continue on their journey. Son #2 is now officially a part of their regenerated family and will be later named in Exodus 18:3.

The overall interpretation is accurate. Some of the individual details spoken of here, but not found in Scripture, are simply reasonable guesses which logically fit in with the text that is given. Those additional thoughts are reasonable speculation.

Zipporah, even though she married Moses, was not his biggest supporter.

Moses and his own personal knowledge about circumcision:

There is one more related topic which is ignored, regarding what I have read so far, and that is, Moses' *knowledge* of circumcision. This knowledge has to come from *somewhere*. Recall that, he, as a Hebrew infant, would have been circumcised; and that his adoptive mother, when she saw him in the ark, recognized immediately that he was a Hebrew child, which would also indicate that he was circumcised. However, it takes more than having been circumcised to cause a father to circumcise his own sons. At some point, through whatever means, Moses had to find out about the importance of circumcision.

For Moses, at some point in his life, circumcision has to have some sort of spiritual meaning to him. If it has no meaning—if it was just some act that occurred at birth, then Moses would not have circumcised either son.

A topic about which we have speculated previously—Moses' knowledge of the Scriptures and of his own spiritual/racial background—is once again revealed. Moses saw to it that his first son was circumcised. Now, *why* would he do that? He would have to know more about his background as a Hebrew—as a son of Israel—than simply his genealogy to insist that his son be circumcised.

Circumcision was not a part of his original adoptive Egyptian family (otherwise, how did his adoptive mother know immediately that he was a Hebrew child?). Circumcision was apparently not a part of the tradition of his Midianite family, given his wife's disgust with the bloody ritual.

This actually helps us to narrow down where Moses learned his spiritual/racial traditions (or, more accurately, the requirements by God of the Hebrew people). He likely did not learn them from his father-in-law, or else his father-in-law would have logically backed him up on the circumcision of his sons. So, logically, there is nowhere else that Moses could have learned these things apart from the time that he was in the royal palace in Egypt. I believe that Moses learned spiritual lessons from his father-in-law, a priest; but specific lessons about his spiritual heritage as a son of Jacob had to come from elsewhere.

I previously speculated that Moses had a Hebrew teacher or teachers (perhaps hired by the royal palace to teach a young Moses language and/or history); and this teacher taught Moses the Hebrew Scriptures (that is, the final $\frac{3}{4}$ ^{ths} of the book of Genesis—which I believe was preserved orally by the Hebrew people). When this teacher walked into the royal Egyptian palace to give young Moses an education, no one realized that he carried the textbook *The History of Man and God* in his head (that is, the book of Genesis). From this textbook, this teacher presumably taught Moses all about his past and his relationship with the God of the Hebrews (which history would have included the ritual of circumcision).

The fact that Moses would choose to circumcise his first son suggests that Moses knew far more about his people, the Hebrews, than simply his genealogical line. The fact that Moses was willing to allow his wife to overrule him and not circumcise the second child suggests that this information was from Moses' past and not something which he recently learned from his father-in-law.

Now, speculating further—and forgive me for this, but I am following out these clues logically—the spiritual life of Moses' father-in-law was probably the pre-Hebrew spiritual life which we find in the post-flood, pre-Abrahamic era. This spiritual life would have included animal sacrifices (which is practiced by Noah and his sons immediately upon exiting the ark) but not circumcision (which is specific to the Hebrew people). We studied this particular spiritual life back in lesson #166 of Genesis.

[Genesis Lessons 101–200](#)
HTML

[Genesis Lessons 101–200](#)
PDF

[Genesis Lessons 101–200](#)
WPD

I am unaware of any commentary which has followed out this information with this specificity. In fact, I don't know if any commentary recognizes the importance of Moses having his first son circumcised. That choice reveals that Moses, raised in the royal palace of Egypt, knew a great many things about the Hebrew faith. This also helps to explain why Moses, at age 40, decided to walk out of the royal palace and to walk among his brothers, the Hebrew slaves.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Moses Meets with Aaron and They Travel to Egypt to Speak to the Hebrew Elders

And so says Y^ehowah unto Aaron, “Go to meet Moses in the desert-wilderness.” And so he went and so he met him in a mountain of the Elohim and so he kissed to him And so makes known Moses to Aaron all the words of Y^ehowah which He had sent him and all the signs which He had commanded him.

Exodus
4:27–28

Also, Y^ehowah said to Aaron, “Go into the desert wilderness to meet Moses.” Therefore he went and met him at the mountain of Elohim; and he greeted him [there]. Then Moses made known to Aaron all the words of Y^ehowah, that He had sent him; and [he made known] all of the signs which He commanded Moses [lit., *him*] [to do].

Around this same time, Jehovah spoke to Aaron, telling him to meet Moses out in the desert-wilderness. Therefore, Aaron did as he was told, and caught up with Moses at Mount Sinai, where they met and greeted one another. Then Moses explained all of Jehovah’s instructions and he told him about the signs and God commanded Moses to employ.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Y ^e howah unto Aaron, “Go to meet Moses in the desert-wilderness.” And so he went and so he met him in a mountain of the Elohim and so he kissed to him And so makes known Moses to Aaron all the words of Y ^e howah which He had sent him and all the signs which He had commanded him.
Dead Sea Scrolls Targum of Onkelos	. And the Lord said to Aharon, Go thou to meet Mosheh in the desert. And he went, and met him at the mountain on which was revealed the glory of the Lord, and he kissed him. And Mosheh showed Aharon all the words with which the Lord had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the Lord had said to Aharon, Go and meet Mosheh in the desert. And he came and met him at the mountain where was revealed the glory of the Lord, and he embraced him. And Mosheh delivered to Aharon all these words with which he had sent him, and all the signs that he had instructed him to work.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And the Lord said to Aaron: Go into the desert to meet Moses. And he went forth to meet him in the mountain of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord, by which he had sent him, and the signs that he had commanded.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mar-Yah said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Mosha." He went, and met him on God's mountain, and kissed him. Mosha told Aaron all the words of Mar-Yah with which he had sent him, and all the signs with which he had instructed him.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went and met him in the mountain of God, Horeb, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD, who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him to perform.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses; and he went and met him in the mount of God, and they kissed each other. And Moses reported to Aaron all the words of the Lord, which he sent, and all the things which he charged him.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the waste land and you will see Moses. So he went and came across Moses at the mountain of God, and gave him a kiss. And
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	Moses gave Aaron an account of all the words of the Lord which he had sent him to say, and of all the signs which he had given him orders to do.
Easy English	The Lord said to Aaron: 'Go into the desert to meet Moses.' So Aaron went. He met Moses at the mountain of God and he kissed him. Then Moses told Aaron all that the Lord had told him to say. He also told Aaron about all the special signs. God had commanded Moses to show these signs to the Israelites and to Pharaoh.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Moses Arrives in Egypt The LORD had spoken to Aaron and told him, "Go out into the desert and meet Moses." So Aaron went and met Moses at the Mountain of God. He saw Moses and kissed him. Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had commanded him to say and all the miracles he must do to prove that God had sent him.
Names of God Bible	Moses and Aaron Tell the People What the Lord Said Meanwhile, Yahweh had told Aaron to meet Moses in the desert. When Aaron met Moses at the mountain of Elohim , he kissed him. Moses told Aaron everything Yahweh had sent him to say and all the miraculous signs Yahweh had commanded him to do.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses." So he went, and Aaron met him at God's mountain and greeted him with a kiss. Moses told Aaron what the LORD had said about his mission and all the signs that the LORD had told him to do.
Contemporary English V.	The LORD sent Aaron to meet Moses in the desert. So Aaron met Moses at Mount Sinai and greeted him with a kiss. Moses told Aaron what God had sent him to say; he also told him about the miracles God had given him the power to perform.
The Living Bible	Now Jehovah said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So Aaron traveled to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God, and met Moses there, and they greeted each other warmly. Moses told Aaron what God had said they must do, and what they were to say, and told him about the miracles they must do before Pharaoh.
New Berkeley Version New Living Translation	. Now the LORD had said to Aaron, "Go out into the wilderness to meet Moses." So Aaron went and met Moses at the mountain of God, and he embraced him. Moses then told Aaron everything the LORD had commanded him to say. And he told him about the miraculous signs the Lord had commanded him to perform.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then the Lord told Aaron: 'Go into the desert to meet Moses.' So he went and met him at the Mountain of God, and they kissed each other. And thereafter, Moses told Aaron everything that the Lord had said, why he was being sent, and of all the things that he'd been instructed to do.
Beck's American Translation International Standard V	. <i>Moses and Aaron Meet and Return to Egypt</i> The LORD told Aaron, "Go meet Moses in the desert." So Aaron [Lit. <i>he</i>] went, found [Lit. <i>encountered</i>] him at the mountain of God, and embraced [Lit. <i>kissed</i>] him. Moses told Aaron all of the LORD's messages that he had sent with Moses, and all of the signs that he commanded him to do [The Heb. lacks <i>to do</i>].
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Meanwhile the Lord had told Aaron to go out and meet Moses in the desert; so he set out and met him at God's mountain, and greeted him with a kiss. And Moses told Aaron all the message the Lord had entrusted to him, and the wonders he had commissioned him to perform.
Translation for Translators	The Israeli people believed Moses when he and Aaron talked to them

Yahweh said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet/see Moses!" So he went *there from Egypt* and met him/me *at Sinai*, the mountain dedicated to God, and *greeted him/me by* kissing him/me on the cheek. Moses/I told Aaron everything that Yahweh had said to him/me when he told him/me to return to Egypt. He/I also told Aaron about all the miracles that Yahweh told him/me to perform.

Urim-Thummim Version

Then YHWH spoke to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went and met him at the mountain of Elohim and hugged him. Moses told Aaron all the Words of YHWH who had sent him, and all the supernatural signs that He had commanded him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible

Jehovah was to say to Aaron: Be going into the wilderness to meet Moses. He was to go and was to meet him in the mountain of he mighty, and was to kiss him. Moses was to tell Aaron the concern of Jehovah, who is to have sent him out, and of the signs he is to have commanded.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible

Now the EVER-LIVING had said to Aaron, "Go and seek Moses in the desert," so he went and met him at the Mount of God, and kissed him. Then Moses related to Aaron all the instructions of the EVER-LIVING which He had sent to him, and the whole of the miracles which He had commanded.

God's Truth (Tyndale)

Then said the Lord unto Aaron: go meet Moses in the wilderness. And he went and met him in the mount of God and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord which he had sent by him, and all the tokens which he had charged him withal.

HCSB

Reunion of Moses and Aaron

Now the LORD had said to Aaron, "Go and meet Moses in the wilderness." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and about all the signs He had commanded him to do.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) Moses meets Aaron

Yahweh said to Aaron, "Go into the desert and meet your brother, Moses." So Aaron went and met him at the Moun tain of God and kissed him. Moses related to Aaron all that Yahweh had said to him and all the signs he had commanded him to perform.

The Heritage Bible

And Jehovah said to Aaron, Walk into the desert to meet Moses. And he walked, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. And Moses caused to stand out boldly to Aaron all the words of Jehovah who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

New American Bible (2002)

The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses." So he went, and when they met at the mountain of God, Aaron kissed him. Moses informed him of all the LORD had said in sending him, and of the various signs he had enjoined upon him.

New American Bible (2011)

The LORD said to Aaron: Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. So he went; when meeting him at the mountain of God, he kissed him. Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and all the signs he had commanded him to do.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

ADONAI said to Aharon, "Go into the desert to meet Moshe." He went, met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. Moshe told him everything *ADONAI* had said in sending him, including all the signs he had ordered him to perform.

exeGesés companion Bible	<p>And Yah Veh says to Aharon, Go into the wilderness to meet Mosheh. - and he goes and meets him in the mount of Elohim and kisses him. And Mosheh tells Aharon all the words that Yah Veh sent him and all the signs he misvahed him:...</p>
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	<p>The Lord said to Aaron, "Go to meet Moses in the wilderness." He went and met him at the mountain of God, and he kissed him. Moses told Aaron about all the things that the Lord had committed to him and all the signs about which He had instructed him.</p>
Kaplan Translation	<p><i>First Confrontation with Pharaoh</i> God said to Aaron, 'Go meet Moses in the desert.' [Aaron] went, and when he met [Moses] near God's Mountain, he kissed him. Moses described to Aaron everything that God had told him about his mission, as well as the miraculous proofs that He had instructed him to display. God's mountain See note on Exodus 3:1, that this appears to indicate that Sinai was on a direct route between Egypt and Midian. However, God may have been angry with Moses for taking this indirect route through the southern Sinai (see note on Exodus 4:24). [Note from Exodus 3:1:] Horeb area (Ramban on Deuteronomy 1:6). This was the area around Sinai (Exodus 17:6, Deuteronomy 1:6, 4:10, cf. Ben Sirah 48:7). Sinai is thus sometimes referred to as 'the mountain of Horeb' (Exodus 33:6). Others, however, say that Horeb was the lower of the two peaks of Sinai (cf. Ibn Ezra on Deuteronomy 1:6). Most early sources identify Mount Sinai with Jebel Musa or Mount Catherine on the southern Sinai peninsula, a five day journey (200 miles) from Egypt, and some 40 miles from the Red Sea (Ma'asoth Binyamin 24; Masa Rabbi Obadiah Bertenoro 3). According to this, Moses had traveled approximately 100 miles along the west coast of the Gulf of Aqaba. There are some difficulties, with this, however, since this 'Mountain of God' seems to have been on a direct route between Midian and Egypt (Exodus 4:27), and not more than a three day journey (some 120 miles) from where the Israelites lived (Exodus 3:18). On the basis of this, it may be conjectured that Mount Sinai was Jebel Ya'llaq (some 32 miles from the northern end of the Gulf of Suez) or Jebel Sinn Bishr (60 miles due east of Bitter Lakes). Obviously, this question is very important in determining the route of the Exodus. The area was called Horeb (Chorebh) because of its dryness (Ibn Ezra). See note on Exodus 3:2.</p>
Orthodox Jewish Bible	<p>And Hashem said to Aharon, Go into the midbar to meet Moshe. And he went, and met him in the Har HaElohim, and kissed him. And Moshe told Aharon kol divrei Hashem who had sent him, and all haOtot He had commanded him.</p>

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	<p>Meanwhile the Lord said to Aaron, "Go out into the desert [wilderness] to meet Moses." When Aaron went, he met Moses at Sinai, the mountain of God, and kissed him. Moses told [reported to] Aaron everything the Lord had said to him when he sent him to Egypt. He also told him about the miracles [signs] which the Lord had commanded him to do.</p>
Kretzmann's Commentary	<p>Verses 27-31 Moses and Aaron before the people And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. This showed that the favor of the Lord had once more turned to Moses. His wife was not in full</p>

accord with him and his belief at that time, but Aaron's coming would be a great comfort to him. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, on Mount Horeb, and kissed him, this cordial greeting being all the more natural since the brothers had not seen each other for about forty years. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord, who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. Aaron thus became familiar with the situation just as the Lord had presented it to Moses.

NET Bible®	The Lord said [<i>Heb</i> "And Yahweh said."] to Aaron, "Go to the wilderness to meet Moses. So he went and met him at the mountain of God and greeted him with a kiss [<i>Heb</i> "and kissed him."]. Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him and all the signs that he had commanded him.
Syndein/Thieme	And Jehovah/God said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses." And he went, and met him in the Mount of 'Elohim/Godhead, and kissed him. {literal, but this is the friendly greeting of the day - we would say gave a hearty hand shake} And Moses told Aaron all the words of Jehovah/God Who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him.
The Voice	Eternal One (to Aaron): Go into the wilderness and meet Moses. So Aaron journeyed to meet Moses, and they met at the mountain of God. <i>When he saw his brother, he kissed him. During their joyful reunion, Moses told Aaron everything that the Eternal had sent him to do, and he explained the miraculous signs He had instructed him to perform.</i>

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner's Mechanical Trans.	...and "YHWH ^{He Is} " said to "Aharon ^{Light bringer} ", walk unto the wilderness to meet "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} ", and he walked and he encountered him in the hill of the "Elohiym ^{Powers} ", and he kissed him, and "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} " [told] "Aharon ^{Light bringer} " all the words of "YHWH ^{He Is} " which he sent him and all the signs which he directed him,...
Green's Literal Translation NASB	. 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. 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.
New European Version	Yahweh said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. He went, and met him on God's mountain, and kissed him. Moses told Aaron all the words of Yahweh with which He had sent him, and all the signs with which He had instructed him.
Stuart Wolf Young's Updated LT	. And Jehovah says unto Aaron, "Go to meet Moses into the wilderness;" and he goes, and meets him in the mount of God, and kisses him, and Moses declares to Aaron all the words of Jehovah with which He has sent him, and all the signs with which He has charged him.

The gist of this passage: God directed Aaron where to meet Moses. They met at the Mountain of God, embraced, and Moses told Aaron about the signs that God entrusted him with.

Explaining God's Sovereignty and Man's Free Will:

Up to this point in time, God has spoken to Moses and given him an assignment. Moses balked, said that he would be unable to speak in front of Pharaoh, so God said, "Listen, I will send your brother Aaron to you. He will do all the talking; you just need to tell him what to say."

To this point in the narrative, Moses and Aaron have not yet been reunited. Moses began this trip towards Egypt, but was stopped suddenly by God because one son had not been circumcised. That was our previous lesson.

It continues to be unclear how God is guiding Moses. Did God tell Moses everything in the desert-wilderness, and now Moses is doing what he was told to do? Or is God speaking to Moses as he continues on this journey? I don't believe that Moses requires God to pop in and out of his dreams in order to guide him and prepare him; but that Moses is simply thinking back on what God taught him in one meeting at the burning bush (see vv. 19, 21–23). I lean toward those verses as being things that God had already said to Moses, and Moses is, on this trip to Egypt, remembering those things and thinking about them.

In fact, even when Moses began to die the sin unto death, it is not necessary for God to speak to him. If Moses is thinking about the things which God said to him; he could also think about what he knows about the book of Genesis. So, if Moses is thinking about the book of Genesis; there may have been a point at which, he thought about circumcision and his own uncircumcised son. Moses—even without God speaking to him directly—could have determined that he was deficient before God. Whether this required additional divine revelation or whether Moses figured it out on his own, we don't know. However, if Moses knew enough to have his first son circumcised, then he probably understood that, as a Hebrew man, his other son should have been circumcised as well (therefore, I don't believe that Moses needed any additional contact from God about circumcision).

In the next verse, we find out that God also spoke to Aaron; and for the timing of this to be right, God had to get Aaron moving *before* Moses told God that he was not up to the job.

This timing is important, why? It helps us to understand God's will, our own free will, and our negative volition. God knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10), so God has known Moses in eternity past; God knew that Moses would balk at taking on the things that God required of him. Therefore, God acted in time *before* Moses stated his objections, knowing what Moses would do. God is sovereign, Moses has free will, Moses is able to exercise his free will; and God acts so that His plan comes to pass, despite Moses' reticence. At some point, from his own free will, Moses will act according to God's plan (he will become the man between God and Pharaoh, essentially pushing Aaron aside).

Acts 5:39 "But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God."

God's will, plan and purposes cannot be stopped.

Psalms 33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the purposes of His heart to all generations.

Where we read *the purposes [of God]*, we understand that to be His sovereign will; and the execution of that will is His plan.

Proverbs 19:21 Many plans are in a man's heart, but the purpose of the LORD will prevail.

We have plans and ideas, many of which we will try to execute from our own free will. However, God's agenda will prevail in the end.

Isaiah 14:24 The LORD of Hosts has sworn: "As I have planned, so will it be; as I have purposed, so will it stand. (Berean Study Bible)

The simple analogy is parents and children—parents have sovereignty in the relationship and children have free will. Where you live, what your job is, the amount of money that you bring in, when and where you vacation, when you have meal times—these things are a matter of the sovereign will of the parents. Now, the children have free will, and they may seek to subvert your plans (at mealtime, they may refuse to eat), but your sovereign will overrides their negative volition (maybe they will go to bed hungry, as a result of your sovereign will).

And when you know your children, you know how they might act, being placed in certain situations (like taking them to the dentist's). I recall going to get ice cream after the seeing the dentist. Knowing what your children will do (foreknowledge) sometimes leads you to take certain steps to deal with their obstinance (negative volition).

God knew how Moses would react, and He is making provision for it, because, His plan calls for Moses to go before Pharaoh and say, "God says to you, 'Let My people go.'"

Exodus 4:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Ahărôn (אֹהֲרֹן) [pronounced ah-huh-ROHN]	transliterated <i>Aaron</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #175 BDB #14
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
mid ^e bâr (מִדְבָּר) [pronounced mid ^e -BAWR]	<i>into the wilderness, toward the unpopulated wilderness, toward the desert wilderness; into the mouth</i>	masculine singular noun with directional hê; with the definite article	Strong's #4057 BDB #184

Translation: Also, Y^ehowah said to Aaron, “Go into the desert wilderness to meet Moses.”

We have moderately detailed interaction between God and Moses; but not as much between God and Aaron. God tells Aaron what to do, and he does it. But how God appeared to him and what was said, is not known.

Aaron knew about his brother Moses, raised in the palace. Their sister, Miriam, saw with her own eyes what had happened. All of this was apparently kept quiet in order to preserve the life of their brother Moses. However, the time is proper and God reunites this family, speaking to Aaron and guiding both Aaron and Moses. It is not easy for one man to leave Midian with his family and another to leave Egypt and to meet one another in the midst of the desert. God had to guide both of them in order for that to happen.

Exodus 4:27a **And the Lord said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.”** (NKJV)

God did speak to Moses about Aaron during the time of the burning bush. God told Moses that Aaron to be his *mouth*, as that is where Moses claimed to be weak. However, this particular arrangement was not God’s first choice. God wanted Moses to be the single mediator between God and Pharaoh. This is because Moses is a **type** of Christ. Two people—one silent partner with a staff and one vocal one—do not properly represent God to man. The illustration that I have used before: a Penn and Teller would *not* be typical of the Savior. This is why sending Moses *and* Aaron was not God’s first choice.

However, God’s overarching plan, where Moses acts as the only mediator between God and Pharaoh, will come to pass, even though Moses does not agree to that at first.

The mountain of God, Mount Sinai, was much closer to Moses than it was to Aaron. For Aaron to be there already to meet Moses suggests that Aaron was not just on some random camping trip, and happened to run into his brother Moses; but that this was a well-orchestrated meet-up organized by God. God spoke to Aaron, and guided these men to meet one another (which in itself is quite amazing, given that Moses intentionally placed himself in the desert-wilderness of Midian to avoid being found by Egyptian officials).

Although God guided Aaron through the desert-wilderness near Midian, we do not know any of the specifics. I lean towards God laying nearly everything on the table. “I am the God of your fathers. Your brother Moses needs you, so you must get up and go—I will guide you.” Or words to that effect. None of this is found in Scripture and let me offer two reasons: (1) From the human standpoint, Moses was not there when God spoke to Aaron, and there is no indication that Aaron even told Moses how it was that he came to meet him (even though that seems like a likely topic of conversation). Since the experience was not Moses’, that would explain why the human author, Moses, did not include God’s words and guidance to Aaron in this record. (2) From the **Divine viewpoint**, Aaron represents God’s second best. He was not a part of God’s originally stated plan, as God wanted *one man* to stand between Himself and Pharaoh. **There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.** (1Tim. 2:5) Aaron is plan B and the presence of Aaron ruins the **typology** of Moses being the sole mediator between God and Pharaoh (between God and man). So God the Holy Spirit gives Aaron no more due than is absolutely necessary for the narrative.

Interestingly enough, God will eventually guide Aaron into becoming a type (the priesthood will begin with Aaron; the High Priest is a type of Christ). This will happen *after* Moses assumes complete and total authority over the people of Israel.

When we come to Exodus 13 (which is all about the **consecration** of the firstborn and the regulations for the Festival of the Unleavened Bread) and 14 (Moses and Pharaoh’s army at the Sea of Reeds), Aaron’s name will not even be mentioned. In Exodus 15 (which is the Song of Moses), Aaron’s name is only mentioned once. What is happening is, God is easing Aaron out of the co-leadership role, which is something that will require Moses to eventually assert his own complete authority—the authority that God mandated.

It has been at least 40 years since Moses had spoken to Aaron; and possibly much longer (Moses was brought up for 40 years in the palace of Pharaoh; and then he has spent the second 40 years of his life in Midian). It is very possible that they have not seen each other since Moses was an infant.

God has designed things so that they would meet up in the desert-wilderness, essentially in the middle of nowhere. Except for God guiding both men, they might not even recognize each other, after all of these years. From a human standpoint, how do these men recognize each other? They are brothers; therefore, there would be strong similarities in their physical appearance.

Was there any intervening relationship between these two men? Had they seen one another at all since Moses was an infant? About the only thing I could suggest at this point—and even this is conjecture—Moses was aware during his life that he had an older brother Aaron. If they met at any point in their adult lives, it is not recorded or even hinted at in Scripture. About the only thing which is hinted at is, Moses appears to know that he has an older brother Aaron. When God mentions *Aaron*, Moses does not ask, “Now, who pray tell is that?” Nor does Moses say, “I have a Hebrew brother?”

We have discussed in past lessons Moses’ understanding of the plan of God for the Hebrew people—he knew about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he knew about circumcision. We may reasonably assume that Moses had knowledge of his genealogy (at least, some of it) and of his family who lived among the Hebrew slaves in Egypt.

As also previously discussed, we do not know exactly how Moses acquired any of this information; and I have postulated that he had Hebrew teachers when in the palace and that he learned much about his own background and his own people from them.

Exodus 4:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
pâgash (פגש) [pronounced <i>paw-GASH</i>]	<i>to rush upon [anyone]; to attack; to meet, to encounter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong’s #6298 BDB #803
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong’s # BDB #88
har (רה) [pronounced <i>har</i>]	<i>hill; mountain, mount; hill-country, a mountainous area, mountain region</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong’s #2022 (and #2042) BDB #249

Exodus 4:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: Therefore he went and met him at the mountain of Elohim;...

This is quite interesting because Aaron would have been in Egypt, whereas, Moses was not far from the Mountain of God. So, it appears that God may have had Aaron on his mule (or, whatever) before He even appeared to Moses. Remember, after their discussion, God tells Moses, “Aaron is on his way right now to meet you.”

Exodus 4:27c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâshaq (נָשַׁק) [pronounced <i>naw-SHAHK</i>]	<i>to kiss, to touch, to have close contact with</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5401 BDB #676
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ʰ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: ...and he greeted him [there].

People in various cultures greet close relatives in a variety of ways, which may be a kiss, a hug, an air kiss, or shaking hands. There are some aspects to Scripture which are purely products of the culture of that day and age. I am good with shaking hands.

The NET Bible: S. R. Driver considers that this verse is a continuation of vv. 17 and 18 and that Aaron met Moses before Moses started back to Egypt (Exodus, 33). The first verb, then, might have the nuance of a past perfect: Yahweh had said.⁷⁶

Exodus 4:27 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. (NKJV)

Again, Mount Sinai is called the *mountain of God*, which suggests to me that Moses recorded this narrative *after* he led the people of God back to the Sinai. I don't think that Moses even slightly appreciates what is about to happen in his life, despite God giving him a rundown of what was going to take place.

⁷⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 19, 2017.

Assuming that these incidents are in chronological order, Moses and his family barely were a few miles from their home when Moses almost died the sin unto death. Then Aaron ran into Moses not too long after that, as they meet on the mountain of God. There is, in all of that, some very exact timing. The principles need to be in the right place at the right time; and God acts so that all of this happens, while respecting and allowing for the free wills of Moses, Aaron and Zipporah.

Did God specify to Moses and to Aaron where to meet? That seems like a reasonable assumption—at least for one of the men. There is nothing in the text which suggests that Moses recognizes what a remarkable thing that this is. His brother—whom he has probably not seen for 40 years (or maybe for 80 years), just happens to come to see him, and they run into one another on the mountain of God. Take God out of the picture, and this is an impossible event.

Exodus 4:27 Also, Y^ehowah said to Aaron, “Go into the desert wilderness to meet Moses.” Therefore he went and met him at the mountain of Elohim; and he greeted him [there]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Regarding this conversation between God and Aaron, we have few details.

Exodus 4:28a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i>]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ʰ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾAhărôn (אַהֲרֹן) [pronounced <i>ah-huh-ROHN</i>]	transliterated <i>Aaron</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #175 BDB #14
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
d ^e bârîym (דְּבָרַיִם) [pronounced <i>daw^b-vawr-EEM</i>]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, affairs; reports</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182

Exodus 4:28a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'āsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom;</i> <i>where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
shālach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-</i> <i>LAKH</i>]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away],</i> <i>to dismiss, to deploy, to put</i> <i>forth, to stretch out, to reach out</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect; what is sent (<i>messengers, a</i> <i>message</i>) is implied; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018

The NET Bible: *This verb and the last one in the verse are rendered with the past perfect nuance because they refer to what the Lord had done prior to Moses' telling Aaron.*⁷⁷

Translation: Then Moses made known to Aaron all the words of Y^ehowah, that He had sent him...

Moses tells Aaron all that he and God talked about.

Exodus 4:28b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when;</i> <i>since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kōl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of,</i> <i>all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
mōwphêth (מוֹפְתֹת) [pronounced <i>moe-</i> <i>FAITH</i>]	<i>a wonder, sign, miracle; a proof</i> <i>[of divine involvement] a sign [of</i> <i>a future event]</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4159 BDB #68
'āsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom;</i> <i>where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
tsâvâh (צִוָּה) [pronounced <i>tsaw-VAW</i>]	<i>to commission, to mandate, to</i> <i>appoint; to ordain; to lay charge</i> <i>upon, to give charge to, charge</i> <i>[command, order]; to instruct [as</i> <i>in, giving an order]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect, 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6680 BDB #845

Translation: ...and [he made known] all of the signs which He commanded Moses [lit., him] [to do].

⁷⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 19, 2017.

Moses also made Aaron aware of the signs which God made him able to do.

God sent Moses on his way with doctrine in his soul. What God said to Moses was the Word of God—it was doctrine—and we see Moses recounting this throughout this journey. When God sends us to do His work, it is with His Word—His doctrine—in our souls; that is how we are sent. Moses also told Aaron about the signs which were his responsibility. The Hebrew word is *tsâvâh* (צַוָּה) [pronounced *tsaw-VAW*] and it means *to lay charge [upon], to give charge [to], to command, to order, to place under one's authority or into one's responsibility*. *Entrusted* is a reasonable one-word translation, if one infers duty and responsibility as a part of it. This verb is in the Piel perfect, meaning that God gave this once and for all to Moses and this was an intensive responsibility (meaning, solemn). This signs and wonders were a great responsibility to have. This is one of the reasons that Moses almost died the sin unto death.

Exodus 4:28 **So Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord Who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him.** (NKJV)

Exodus 4:28 **Then Moses made known to Aaron all the words of Y^ehowah, that He had sent him; and [he made known] all of the signs which He commanded Moses [lit., *him*] [to do].** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Interestingly enough, God did not fully brief Aaron. God did tell him, “I need you to go find your brother Moses in Midian;” but God did not add, “...and these are the plans which I have for you and Moses.” All of those plans were divulged to Moses directly, who then revealed them to Aaron. *Why* they were meeting up and what God had planned for them was revealed by God to Moses; and Moses reveals it to Aaron. This maintains the proper authority chain. God is over Moses who is over Aaron.

Moses tells Aaron everything that God has said to him. We may reasonably suppose that Aaron shared his own calling as well, which was probably not with the same level of detail. Remember that Aaron has come out to Midian to find Moses and God knew about it. It makes little sense that Aaron, on a whim, decides, *why not go out and see my brother Moses and catch up?* God, foreknowing Moses’ resistance, would have already contacted Aaron and brought him into the picture.

Interestingly enough, we do not have the phrase, *and Aaron then told Moses*. No doubt, Aaron spoke to Moses, but whatever it was that he had to say was not important enough to include in Scripture.

The strength of Moses should have rested in God from the beginning; but God bringing Aaron to him indicates that Moses ended up being dependent, at first, upon his older brother.

Even though God knew that Moses could handle this, Moses did not believe that; and apparently, could not be convinced otherwise. God still worked with Moses, despite the fact that Moses had not fully trusted God. God uses imperfect men—all of the time. This is why God is able to use you and I.

At any time in human history, God could have used **elect angels**—those who have never sinned—to speak to man and to give man perfectly accurate teaching and divine viewpoint. God chose not to do this. Angels are rarely brought into the picture. God chooses imperfect man to communicate God’s truth to imperfect man. It should be clear that Moses is imperfect—we should have no doubts about that. Yet God is able to use Moses to lead Israel. In fact, Moses will be one of the greatest leaders of Israel. He will be known as the father of nation Israel (just as Abraham is the father of the Hebrew race).

At this point in our narrative, Moses and Aaron are in the Midian desert, close to the Mountain of God, talking about what God has planned for them. In the next verse, which would have logically been a good place to start a new chapter, Moses and Aaron will be in Egypt, speaking to the elders of Israel.

Exodus 4:27–28 **Also, Y^ehowah said to Aaron, “Go into the desert wilderness to meet Moses.” Therefore he went and met him at the mountain of Elohim; and he greeted him [there]. Then Moses made known to Aaron all the**

words of Y^ehowah, that He had sent him; and [he made known] all of the signs which He commanded Moses [lit., *him*] [to do]. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:27–28 Around this same time, Jehovah spoke to Aaron, telling him to meet Moses out in the desert-wilderness. Therefore, Aaron did as he was told, and caught up with Moses at Mount Sinai, where they met and greeted one another. Then Moses explained all of Jehovah’s instructions and he told him about the signs and God commanded Moses to employ. (Kukis paraphrase)

In vv. 27–28, Moses and Aaron are in the desert-wilderness of Midian chatting with one another, having met at the Mountain of God (Mount Sinai). In v. 29, they have gathered together the elders of the sons of Israel, which indicates that they are now in Egypt. So, between vv. 28 and 29, Moses and Aaron (and however many servants, if any) travel from Midian to Egypt.

It is very likely that Zipporah deserted Moses, and took with her, their two sons. We do not hear her name again until Exodus 18:2, when her father brings her and Moses’ two sons *back* to Moses. So, at some point after the circumcision of their second son and Exodus 18 (only a few months later), she deserts Moses. Given her emotionally charged response to Moses requiring her to circumcise their younger son, I would guess that she has already left Moses.

And so goes Moses and Aaron and so they gather together all elders of sons of Israel. And so speaks Aaron all the words which spoke Y^ehowah unto Moses. And so he does the signs to eyes of the people. And so believe the people and so they hear that visited Y^ehowah sons of Israel and that He has seen their affliction. And so they bow and so they prostrate [themselves].

Exodus
4:29–31

So Moses went—along with Aaron—and they assembled all of the elders [from] the sons of Israel. Then Aaron proclaimed the words that Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, and Moses [lit., *he*] performed these signs before the people. Therefore, the people believed and they know [lit., *have heard*] that Y^ehowah has visited the sons of Israel and that He has seen their affliction. Consequently, they bowed and prostrated [themselves].

Moses and Aaron, therefore, went to Egypt and they assembled the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron said the words that Jehovah spoke to Moses and Moses performed the signs that God gave him to do. Therefore, the people believed God and they believed that Jehovah had visited the sons of Israel and had observed their afflictions. Consequently, they bowed before God, prostrating themselves.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so goes Moses and Aaron and so they gather together all elders of sons of Israel. And so speaks Aaron all the words which spoke Y^ehowah unto Moses. And so he does the signs to eyes of the people. And so believe the people and so they hear that visited Y^ehowah sons of Israel and that He has seen their affliction. And so they bow and so they prostrate [themselves].

Dead Sea Scrolls
Targum of Onkelos

And Mosheh and Aharon went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; and Aharon told all the words which the Lord had spoken with Mosheh, and did the signs in the eyes of the people. And the people believed, and understood (heard) that the Lord had remembered the sons of Israel, and that heir slavery was manifest before him; and they bowed, and adored.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Mosheh and Aharon went, and gathered together all the elders of the sons of Israel. And Aharon spake all the words which the Lord had spoken with Mosheh, and did the signs in the eyes of the peo-ple. And the people believed, and heard that the Lord had remembered the sons of Israel, and that their bondage was manifest before Him; and they bowed them-selves and worshipped. [JERUSALEM. And they kneeled down.]
Revised Douay-Rheims	And they came together, and they assembled all the ancients of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had said to Moses: and he wrought the signs before the people, And the people believed. And they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel: and that he had looked upon their affliction: and falling down they adored.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Mosha and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the B'nai Yisrael. Aaron spoke all the words that Mar-Yah had spoken to Mosha, and did the signs in the sight of the people. The people believed, and when they heard that Mar-Yah had visited the B'nai Yisrael, and that he had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.
Peshitta (Syriac)	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 said to Moses, and performed the signs in the presence of the people. And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had remembered the children of Israel, and that he had seen their affliction, then they knelt down and worshipped before the LORD.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Moses and Aaron went and gathered the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all these words, which God spoke to Moses, and wrought the miracles before the people. And the people believed and rejoiced, because God visited the children of Israel, and because he saw their affliction: and the people bowed and worshipped.

Significant differences:

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Moses and Aaron went and got together all the chiefs of the children of Israel: And Aaron said to them all the words the Lord had said to Moses, and did the signs before all the people. And the people had faith in them; and hearing that the Lord had taken up the cause of the children of Israel and had seen their troubles, with bent heads they gave him worship.
Easy English	Then Moses and Aaron went to Egypt. They brought together all the leaders of the Israelites. Aaron told them all the things that God had said to Moses. Then Moses did the signs in front of the people. And the people believed Aaron and Moses. They put their heads down and they worshipped God. They had heard that God had come to his people. God had seen their hard life and he was sorry for them. That is why they worshipped God.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	So Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the Israelites. Then Aaron spoke to the people and told them everything the LORD had told Moses. Then Moses did the miracles for all the people to see, and they believed what they had heard. Then the Israelites understood that the LORD had seen their troubles and had come to help them. So they bowed down and worshiped God.
<i>The Message</i>	So Moses and Aaron proceeded to round up all the leaders of Israel. Aaron told them everything that God had told Moses and demonstrated the wonders before the people. And the people trusted and listened believingly that God was concerned with what was going on with the Israelites and knew all about their affliction. They bowed low and they worshiped.

Names of God Bible Then Moses and Aaron went to Egypt and assembled all the leaders of the people of Israel. Aaron told them everything **Yahweh** had said to Moses. He also did the miraculous signs for the people, and the people believed them. When they heard that **Yahweh** was concerned about the people of Israel and that he had seen their misery, they knelt, bowing with their faces touching the ground.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V. Later they brought together the leaders of Israel, and Aaron told them what the LORD had sent Moses to say. Then Moses worked the miracles for the people, and everyone believed. They bowed down and worshiped the LORD because they knew that he had seen their suffering and was going to help them.

The Living Bible So Moses and Aaron returned to Egypt and summoned the elders of the people of Israel to a council meeting. Aaron told them what Jehovah had said to Moses, and Moses performed the miracles as they watched. Then the elders believed that God had sent them, and when they heard that Jehovah had visited them and had seen their sorrows, and had decided to rescue them, they all rejoiced and bowed their heads and worshiped.

New Berkeley Version .

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible So Moses and Aaron went and gathered the elders of the children of IsraEl, and Aaron told them everything that God had said to Moses; then he performed the miracles before the people... and the people believed and were happy, because God was visiting the children of IsraEl and He had seen how they were being oppressed. Then the people bowed to their faces before him.

Beck's American Translation .

International Standard V Later, Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelis. Aaron spoke everything that the LORD had spoken to Moses, and Moses [Lit. *he*] performed the miracles [Lit. *signs*] before the very eyes of the people. The people believed and understood [Or *they heard*] that the LORD had paid attention to the Israelis and had seen their affliction. They bowed their heads and prostrated themselves in worship.

New Advent (Knox) Bible So together they went and summoned all the elders of the Israelite race to meet them; and when Aaron told them all the Lord had said to Moses, and shewed the people the appointed signs, the people were convinced. At last the Lord had come to enquire after the sons of Israel, and had witnessed their affliction; they would bow down and worship.

Translation for Translators *So Aaron and Moses/I returned to Egypt. There they/we gathered together all the Israeli elders/leaders. Aaron told them everything that Yahweh had told Moses/me, and he performed all the miracles as the people watched. They believed that what they/we were saying was true. When they heard that Yahweh had seen how the Israeli people were being cruelly oppressed and that he was going to help them, they bowed down and worshiped Yahweh.*

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible Moses and Aaron were to go out, and assemble the elders of the sons of Isra-el. Aaron was to declare the concern, that Jehovah is to have declared to Moses, even was he to prepare the signs before the eyes of the people. The people were to give him credit, that he was to hear Jehovah, and is to have noticed the sons of Isra-el, even is to have seen their affliction, and they were to bow down a bowing down.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible Then Moses and Aaron proceeded and collected all the Magistracy of the children of Israel. And Aaron repeated all the matters which the EVER-LIVING had addressed

HCSB	to Moses, and produced evidences before the eyes of the People ; and the people were convinced, and acknowledged that the EVER-LIVING had visited Israel, and that He had looked upon their sufferings ; — so they honoured and worshipped Him. Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites. Aaron repeated everything the LORD had said to Moses and performed the signs before the people. The people believed, and when they heard that the LORD had paid attention to them and that He had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.
Tree of Life Version	Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of <i>Bnei-Yisrael</i> . Aaron spoke all the words that Adonai had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed. When they heard that <i>ADONAI</i> had remembered <i>Bnei-Yisrael</i> and had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped.
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the Elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words that YHWH had spoken to Moses and performed the supernatural signs in the sight of the people. Then the people believed and when they heard that YHWH had visited the children of Israel, and that He had observed their affliction, then they bowed their heads and prostrated.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) The Heritage Bible	And Moses and Aaron walked, and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel; And Aaron spoke all the words which Jehovah had spoken to Moses, and did the signs in the eyes of the people. And the people believed; and when they attentively heard that Jehovah had visited the children of Israel, and that he had seen their misery, then they bowed, and prostrated themselves.
New American Bible (2011)	Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered all the elders of the Israelites. Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses, and he performed the signs before the people. The people believed, and when they heard that the LORD had observed the Israelites and had seen their affliction [the same phrases used in God's dialogue with Moses in 3:16–17], they knelt and bowed down.
New RSV	Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites. Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and performed the signs in the sight of the people. The people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had given heed to the Israelites and that he had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped.
Revised English Bible	Moses and Aaron then went and assembled all the elders of Israel. Aaron repeated to them everything that the LORD had said to Moses; he performed the signs before the people, and they were convinced. When they heard that the LORD had shown his concern for the Israelites and seen their misery, they bowed to the ground in worship.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then Moshe and Aharon went and gathered together all the leaders of the people of Isra'el. Aharon said everything <i>ADONAI</i> had told Moshe, who then performed the signs for the people to see. The people believed; when they heard that <i>ADONAI</i> had remembered the people of Isra'el and seen how they were oppressed, they bowed their heads and worshipped.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and Mosheh and Aharon go and gather all the elders of the sons of Yisra El: and Aharon words all the words Yah Veh worded to Mosheh

and works the signs in the eyes of the people:
and the people trust:
and when they hear
that Yah Veh visits the sons of Yisra El
and that he sees their humiliation,
they bow and prostrate.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)

Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites. Aaron repeated all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses, and he performed the signs in the sight of the people, and the people were convinced. When they heard that the Lord had taken note of the Israelites and that He had seen their plight, they bowed low in homage.

Kaplan Translation

Moses and Aaron went [to Egypt], and they gathered all the elders of Israel. Aaron related all the words that God had told Moses, and he demonstrated the miraculous proofs before the people. The people believed. They accepted the message that God had granted special providence to the Israelites, and that He had seen their misery. They bowed their heads and prostrated themselves.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Moshe and Aharon went and assembled together kol Ziknei Bnei Yisrael; And Aharon spoke all hadevarim which Hashem had spoken unto Moshe; and he did haOtot before the eyes of HaAm.

The Scriptures 1998

And HaAm believed; and when they heard that Hashem had visited the Bnei Yisroel, and that He had looked upon their oni, then they bowed their heads and worshiped. And Mosheh went with Aharon and gathered together all the elders of the children of Yisra'el. And Aharon spoke all the words which הוה had spoken to Mosheh. Then he did the signs before the eyes of the people. And the people believed. And they heard that הוה had visited the children of Yisra'el and that He had looked on their affliction, and they bowed their heads and did obeisance.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

Then Moses and Aaron went [into Egypt] and assembled all the elders of the Israelites; and Aaron said all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then Moses performed the signs [given to him by God] before the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the Israelites and that He had looked [with compassion] on their suffering, then they bowed their heads and worshiped [the LORD].

The Expanded Bible

Moses and Aaron gathered all the elders of the ·Israelites [^Lsons/^Tchildren of Israel], and Aaron told them everything that the Lord had told Moses. Then Moses did the ·miracles [signs] for all the people to see, and the ·Israelites [^Lpeople] ·believed [trusted]. When they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their ·troubles [afflictions; humiliation], they bowed down and worshiped him.

Kretzmann's Commentary

And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, as the Lord had commanded, Exodus 3:16; and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed, they were convinced by the words of Aaron, as they were substantiated by the miraculous signs given to Moses. And when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, that He had investigated their condition in the land of their bondage, and that He had looked upon their affliction, their distressing burdens, then they bowed their heads and worshiped. The promise of the patriarchs was still alive in their hearts, they took new hope for the future, and they thanked God for the prospect of a speedy deliverance. This new hope at the same time welded the people together into one organization by making them conscious once more of their position. Thus the believers will ever accept all the promises of God in His Word with a thankful heart and place their confidence in Him without wavering.

NET Bible®	Then Moses and Aaron went and brought together all the Israelite elders. Aaron spoke [<i>Heb</i> “And Aaron spoke.”] all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people, and the people believed. When they heard that the Lord had attended to [Or “intervened for.”] the Israelites and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed down close to the ground.
Syndein/Thieme	And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which Jehovah/God had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed. {Note: This is very clear. Moses used signs and miracles as all signs and miracles were used before the completed cannon of scripture - to evangelize. They are attention getters and a means of getting people to make the great decision to believe. So, the Exodus Generation was a generation of believers - though we will see how, without doctrine, they were terrible failures.} And when they {the Egyptians} heard that Jehovah/God had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.
The Voice	Moses and Aaron then traveled <i>back to Egypt</i> and gathered together all of the elders of Israel’s people. Aaron gave a speech that conveyed all the words that the Eternal had given to Moses and then performed the <i>miraculous</i> signs in front of the people. The people believed <i>Moses and Aaron</i> . When everyone heard that the Eternal was concerned about the Israelites and that He had observed their oppression, they bowed down and began to worship <i>with grateful hearts</i> .

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Brenner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} walked, and "Aharon ^{Light bringer} , and they gathered all the bearded ones of the sons of "Yisra'el ^{He turns El aside} , and "Aharon ^{Light bringer} spoke all the words which "YHWH ^{He Is} spoke to "Mosheh ^{Plucked out} , and he did the signs to the eyes of the people, and the people [supported], and they heard that "YHWH ^{He Is} registered the sons of "Yisra'el ^{He turns El aside} , and that he saw their affliction, and they bowed the head and they bent themselves down,...
Context Group Version	And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the sons of Israel: and Aaron spoke all the words which YHWH had spoken to Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people gave their trust: and when they heard that YHWH had visited the sons of Israel, and that he had seen their affliction, then they lowered their heads and bowed down in deference.
Green’s Literal Translation Modern English Version	. 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 and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed. And when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, they bowed down and worshipped.
NASB	Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; and Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. 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 worshipped.
Stuart Wolf Young’s Updated LT	. And Moses goes—Aaron also—and they gather all the elders of the sons of Israel, and Aaron speaks all the words which Jehovah has spoken unto Moses, and does the signs before the eyes of the people; and the people believe when they hear that Jehovah has looked after the sons of Israel, and that He has seen their affliction; and they bow and do obeisance.

The gist of this passage: Once Moses and Aaron arrive in Egypt, they gather the elders and speak to them, telling them what God has said and showing them the signs that God has given to Moses. They are to know that God is with them and He knows what is going on in their lives.

Exodus 4:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced <i>moh-SHEH</i>]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'Ahârôn (אַהֲרֹן) [pronounced <i>ah-huh-ROHN</i>]	transliterated <i>Aaron</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #175 BDB #14

Translation: [So Moses went—along with Aaron—...](#)

This word *go, went* must occur 10 times in this chapter. Moses and Aaron went to Egypt. We have no idea what happened between God and Aaron, but Aaron seems to be fine with what is happening; Moses was a bit more reticent.

Exodus 4:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âçaph (אַצַּף) [pronounced <i>aw-SAHF</i>]	<i>to collect, to relocate, to transfer, to transport, to gather (together), to gather and remove, to remove</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #622 BDB #62
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

Exodus 4:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
z ^e qênîym (זִקְנִיִּם) [pronounced zê-kay-NEEM]	<i>old men; elders; chiefs, respected ones</i>	masculine plural adjective; used as a substantive; construct state	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
bânîym (בְּנֵי) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men; young men, youths</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun; God-given name to Jacob; and national name for the Jewish people	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975

The NET Bible: *These are the leaders of the tribes who represented all the people. Later, after the exodus, Moses will select the most capable of them and others to be rulers in a judicial sense (Exod 18:21).*⁷⁸

Translation: ...and they assembled all of the elders [from] the sons of Israel.

The slavery practiced in Egypt would have been different than what we did in the United States. The Jewish people did live in their own city (Goshen) and they did have elders who acted as sort of a governing body (with limited powers); and they were able to assemble.

Now this does not mean that the Pharaoh was aware that they had assembled—this may have been done in secret. But, these elders would have been representatives of the people, and they could be counted on to speak to the rest of the people of Israel.

The way this is written, it sounds as though Aaron did not have as much trouble with God speaking to him as Moses did. God told Aaron to go out to the desert and he did. Moses tells Aaron what God had planned for them and Aaron immediately takes Moses to the elders of Israel. We don't know how quickly Aaron consented to all of this, but the text suggests that Aaron went along with all of this almost immediately. Since Moses wrote this, we will find more details concerning his conversations with God than with Aaron's. Even though Aaron makes some serious mistakes in the future, one should not underestimate his spiritual impact. The entire **Levitical priesthood** began with Aaron at the head. Also, I believe that it was his influence over Moses that caused Moses to be less difficult about going through with God's plan.

This is likely the first meeting between Moses and Aaron and they are about eighty years old. Israel was operating on a family, elder system of rule. We began with a family priesthood and God worked through various family members. When the population grew, God chose a particular race to work through. This is called the age of the patriarchs ("fathers") because their primary organization was through the elder members of the tribes. The major change to occur is that God will organize them as a nation and rule over them as their king. Later on, the people of Israel will reject Jesus Christ as their king. In 1Samuel, they will reject Jesus Christ as their king and ask for a human king to lead them.

Moses did not want to speak and desired for God to chose someone else. God chose Aaron, knowing that Moses was by far the more powerful and dynamic speaker and leader. In speaking to the pharaoh, Moses will soon

⁷⁸ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 19, 2017.

become frustrated when he listens to Aaron speak (while he ruminates that he should have said it this way and he should have said this or that, etc.). Finally Moses will push Aaron aside and begin doing his own speaking.

Exodus 4:29 **Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.** (NKJV)

This is a sudden change of location—Moses and Aaron were at the Mountain of God in v. 28 and here they are in Egypt in v. 29—and this would have been a good place to begin a new chapter (just like Genesis, there are places where the chapter division in Exodus could have been much better done). The original text of the Old Testament was without vowels, without spaces, and without verse or chapter divisions. The only separations were the books themselves, and that is because they were literally different books. In my opinion, the first half of Exodus 4 should have been included with the previous chapter (it is all a single conversation between God and Moses). And here, we have a sudden change of location, that right in this portion of Exodus 4 should have been the beginning for a new chapter. So, Exodus 3:1–4:17 should have been chapter 3. Exodus 4:18–28 should have been an abbreviated chapter 4. Then chapter 5 should have begun here, with v. 29.

Because chapter divisions are not always done perfectly, many Bible translations include subheadings. V. 29 should have had the subheading, ***Moses and Aaron in Egypt***. Interestingly enough, none of the 90 or so translations which I review do this.

Exodus 4:29 **So Moses went—along with Aaron—and they assembled all of the elders [from] the sons of Israel.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

V. 27 is also a good place to begin a new chapter—this is where God speaks to Aaron. Many translations used a subheading at this point (The Christian Community Bible, HCSB, ISV, among others).

Let's get a bird's eye view of this. I will use different shading to indicate where a chapter division should have been.

An Overview of Exodus 3–5		
Chapter	Passage	Location/Basic Description
Moses at the Burning Bush		(Midianite Desert-wilderness)
Exodus 3	Exodus 3:1–22	Moses comes across the burning bush in the desert, which is God manifesting Himself to Moses. God tells Moses what He wants Moses to do.
Exodus 4a	Exodus 4:1–17	God and Moses continue to discuss what God wants Moses to do. God eventually allows Moses to depend upon his brother Aaron to speak before Pharaoh.
Moses in Transition		(Moses travels toward Egypt from Midian)
Exodus 4b	Exodus 4:18–23	Moses begins to head back to Egypt with his family; God continues communicating with him (whether these are additional meetings or Moses is simply recalling what God said already—we don't know).
Exodus 4c	Exodus 4:24–26	God requires Moses' second son to be circumcised or Moses will die the sin unto death.
Exodus 4d	Exodus 4:27–28	Moses and Aaron meet up in the desert-wilderness in Midian.
Even though this is only 11 verses, that would not make this the shortest chapter in the Bible. Furthermore, there is a great deal of information to come out of this section.		
Moses and Aaron in Egypt		(Moses is in Egypt)

Chapter	Passage	Location/Basic Description
Exodus 4e	Exodus 4:29–31	Moses and Aaron speak to the elders of Israel (in Egypt) concerning what God wants to do.
Exodus 5a	Exodus 5:1–23	Moses and Aaron speak before Pharaoh and ask that the Hebrew people be given time away from Egypt to worship God. Pharaoh increases the workload of the slaves instead.

As you can see, topically and geographically, these chapters could have been divided up much more logically.

Exodus 3–4a should be Exodus 3.

Exodus 4b–4d (or 4e) should have been Exodus 4. This would have made Exodus 4 fairly short and Exodus 3 somewhat long; but neither would be that much outside of the norm.

Exodus 5 is fine as it is, or it could include Exodus 4e. I cannot explain why these 3 chapters were divided up as they were, apart from making them approximately the same length.

No doubt, those responsible for splitting up each book into chapters were saying, “Where’s Kukis to help us out here?”

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Exodus 4:30a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAHR</i>]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong’s #1696 BDB #180
’Ahârôn (אַהֲרֹן) [pronounced <i>ah-huh-ROHN</i>]	transliterated <i>Aaron</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #175 BDB #14
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong’s #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong’s #3605 BDB #481
d ^e bârîym (דְּבָרִים) [pronounced <i>daw^b-vawr-EEM</i>]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, affairs; reports</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong’s #1697 BDB #182
’âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong’s #834 BDB #81

Exodus 4:30a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Mosheh (מֹשֶׁה) [pronounced moh-SHEH]	<i>to draw out [of the water] and is transliterated Moses</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4872 BDB #602

Translation: Then Aaron proclaimed the words that Y^ehowah spoke to Moses,...

God spoke to Moses; then Moses told Aaron what God had told him; then Aaron told these elders what God said to Moses.

We don't know if Aaron had to stop now and again and ask Moses, "Now, what did God say next?" Even if he didn't, there was a clear line of authority, from God to Moses to Aaron.

Exodus 4:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
'ôwth (אוֹת) [pronounced oath]	<i>sign, a distinguishing mark; token, pledge; remembrance; assurance; a miraculous sign; an omen, a warning</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #226 BDB #16
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Exodus 4:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿēynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>ġay-nah-YIM</i>]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
The lâmed preposition + ʿayin mean, literally <i>to [for] [one's] eyes; before [one's] eyes</i> . The sense is <i>before any one, in the sight of [someone], in view of [someone]</i> .			
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>ġahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: ...and Moses [lit., *he*] performed these signs before the people.

Even though Moses did not want to speak in front of a crowd (and very few people like doing that), he was willing to show what God did with his staff and with his hand.

It is unclear in the English and in the Hebrew as to who performed these signs—whether it was Aaron or Moses. However, it would be most likely that Moses did so that the Jews were able to understand the chain of command (from God to Moses to Aaron). Furthermore, when Moses stopped communicating through Aaron, it would be important that the elders recognized that God had spoken through Moses and had called upon Moses.

On the other hand, it is Aaron who will perform these signs in front of Pharaoh (Exodus 7:10); so, logically, it would seem that Aaron would perform these signs here.

In other words, there are good arguments to be made for either man to perform the signs here. However, when they are done again before Pharaoh, Aaron will be the one to throw down the staff (Exodus 7:10).

So there is no misunderstanding, there is no contradiction to be found here; there is missing clarification.

Exodus 4:30 **And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people** [that is, the Hebrew elders]. (NKJV)

Aaron and Moses operate somewhat like Penn and Teller, the magicians. Aaron does all of the talking, then Moses comes out and does signs before the audience (although, there are certain times when Aaron does these signs). What Aaron tells them combined with the signs that Moses does convince these elders that Moses and Aaron are from God. It does not appear that Moses does any talking at all.

God has told Moses what to say; Moses tells Aaron what to say; Aaron speaks to the elders (and, later to Pharaoh). Although this is laid out pretty carefully here in this verse, that God spoke to Moses, Moses spoke to Aaron and Aaron spoke to the elders; this will not be recorded for each meeting. There will be a number of shortcuts taken in the narrative as we proceed (which keeps the narrative from being bogged down with unimportant details).

Exodus 4:30 **hen Aaron proclaimed the words that Y^{ehowah} spoke to Moses, and Moses** [lit., *he*] performed these signs before the people. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Exodus 4:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âman (אמן) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHN</i>]	<i>to stand firm, to believe, to trust, caused to believe</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #539 BDB #52
'am (אם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: Therefore, the people believed...

The people are the elders; and their testimony would cause many other sons of Israel to believe in their God (and that He was with them).

Exodus 4:31b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma' (שמע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The LXX (Greek OT) has "and they rejoiced," probably reading ὑψήθη· (vayyismk khu) instead of what the MT reading, ὑψήθη· (vayyismk 'u, "and they heard"). To rejoice would have seemed a natural response of the people at the news, and the words sound similar in Hebrew.</i>⁷⁹</p>			
<p>The NET Bible: <i>The form is the preterite with the vav consecutive, "and they heard." It clearly is a temporal clause subordinate to the following verbs that report how they bowed and worshiped. But it is also in sequence to the preceding: they believed, and then they bowed when they heard.</i>⁸⁰</p>			
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

⁷⁹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 19, 2017.

⁸⁰ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 19, 2017.

Exodus 4:31b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pâqad (פָּקַד) [pronounced paw-KAHD]	<i>to go to a person, to visit, to have personal contact with, to sort out, to visit a person, to commit; to charge to the care of; to fall upon, to attack, to number, to take a census</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #6485 BDB #823
The NET Bible: Or "intervened for." The word פָּקַד (paqad) has traditionally been translated "visited," which is open to many interpretations. It means that God intervened in the life of the Israelites to bless them with the fulfillment of the promises. It says more than that he took notice of them, took pity on them, or remembered them. He had not yet fulfilled the promises, but he had begun to act by calling Moses and Aaron. The translation "attended to" attempts to capture that much. ⁸¹			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men; young men, youths</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun; God-given name to Jacob; and national name for the Jewish people	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975

Translation: ...and they know [lit., have heard] that Y^ehowah has visited the sons of Israel...

They hear and they believe that their God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has visited them.

Exodus 4:31c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean *and for, and that*; however, together, they can be taken to mean *when, that, for, because, how*.

⁸¹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 19, 2017.

Exodus 4:31c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'ōnîy (עָנִי) [pronounced gon-EE]	<i>affliction, poverty, humility, humiliation</i>	masculine singular substantive; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6040 BDB #777

Translation: ...and that He has seen their affliction.

They know that their God has taken an interest in them and has observed the affliction that they have suffered.

Exodus 4:31d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qâdad (קָדָד) [pronounced kaw-DAHD]	<i>to bow down, to worship, to prostrate oneself [out of honor or reverence]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6915 BDB #869
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâchah (שָׁחָה) [pronounced shaw-KHAW]	<i>to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to do obeisance to; to honor [with prayers]; to do homage to, to submit to</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #7812 BDB #1005

The NET Bible: *The verb וַיִּשְׁתַּכְּוּ (vayyishtakhavu) is usually rendered “worshiped.” More specifically, the verbal root שָׁחָה (khava) in the hishtaphel stem means “to cause oneself to be low to the ground.” While there is nothing wrong with giving it a general translation of “worship,” it may be better in a passage like this to take it in conjunction with the other verb (“bow”) as a verbal hendiadys, using it as an adverb to that verb. The implication is certainly that they prayed, or praised, and performed some other aspect of worship, but the text may just be describing it from their posture of worship. With this response, all the fears of Moses are swept aside – they believed and they were thankful to God.⁸²*

⁸² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?exo4.htm> (footnote); accessed February 19, 2017.

Translation: Consequently, they bowed and prostrated [themselves].

As a result of all of this, the elders prostrated themselves before God (this would not have been before Moses and Aaron).

Whereas the break between chapters 3 and 4 was almost arbitrary, this chapter break makes more sense. Moses and Aaron will next speak to Pharaoh. From a human standpoint, I don't know that we know how this was achieved. Do these elders have some sort of power or authority in Egypt? That is, if one or more of them went and spoke to Pharaoh, would that have gotten Moses and Aaron a meeting with Pharaoh?

My guess is, the human aspect to this is overlooked because God made a way for Moses to speak to Pharaoh.

When we are in God's plan, He opens up the doors for us. Moses spent more time objecting and asking "what if" than it took for he and Aaron to talk to the elders of Israel and convince them that God had spoken to Moses and that it was time for them to leave Egypt.

Prior to this time, and despite being enslaved, the elders and the people coped while living in Egypt. They apparently had some doctrine and the blessing of God and found their right women (or men) and they had many children and the picture of the Israelites under Egypt was one of peace and prosperity and security. However, when it was time for God to take them out of Egypt, they had suffered enough pain and degradation and humiliation to desire to leave Egypt. This is not an easy thing to do, even as a slave, when you have lived under slavery all of your life. There is a lot of security involved here. People are more than willing to bargain their freedom for a little security.

Exodus 4:31 **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 worshiped.** (NKJV)

The *people* here are the Hebrew elders. They have witnessed the signs of Moses and they believe that Y^ehowah is now with them. This suggests some prior knowledge of Y^ehowah. Again, I believe that many if not most Hebrews knew the book of Genesis. That was their Bible. It had been their Bible for 400 years. They knew how they got to Egypt; they knew Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and they knew about their God. Furthermore, they knew about Canaan. I would also make the assumption that they knew about circumcision (and I'd be willing to bet that all Hebrew male children had been circumcised).

We have already deduced certain things about the book of Genesis that Moses knew. He knew Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he knew about circumcision and its fundamental importance to the Hebrew people. Now if Moses knows this—and he was raised in Pharaoh's palace—then it is far more likely that the Hebrew people in general know these things.

This knowledge of the book of Genesis is implied by Scripture (no one ever says, "Now who exactly is this Abraham character you keep talking about?"). On the other hand, there do not appear to be any direct quotations from Genesis found in the 4 books of Moses. Whereas, throughout the New Testament, we find the words, *it stands written* (before quoting from the Old Testament); we do not find a similar situation here. Moses will never say, *and it stands written*. However, that could be simply because the book of Genesis had not been committed to a written form up to that point in human history.

For some reason, when the books of Moses and Genesis are put into a written form, then they will retain that exact text from that time forward (although there is some human error in the transmission of the text, it is rare that we cannot understand the text, despite there being some underlying textual problems).

Exodus 4:31 **Therefore, the people believed and they know [lit., have heard] that Y^ehowah has visited the sons of Israel and that He has seen their affliction. Consequently, they bowed and prostrated [themselves].** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

As I have discussed previously, their Bible (= the book of Genesis) was probably not in written form, but passed down from generation to generation verbally and then memorized.

Earlier, I suggested that when the people of Israel cried out because of their slavery, I noted that it did not say *they cried out to God*. However, here, clearly, their attention is on God. They are not worshiping Moses and Aaron; nor are they worshiping the things that Moses and Aaron are able to do. So there has to still be a connection between the Hebrew people and their God. This connection appears to be strengthened somewhat in time, but never to the point where Gen X fully trusts in their God.

Incidentally, the men to whom Moses is speaking are a part of Gen X—Gen X are those who are 20 years old or older when Israel exits Egypt. This particular name is a designation of mine, not one found in Scripture. However, there are a few places in the **Law of Moses** where the generations are distinguished (they have to be, as one generation will die the sin unto death but the other will go into the land and take it).

Exodus 4:29–31 **So Moses went—along with Aaron—and they assembled all of the elders [from] the sons of Israel. Then Aaron proclaimed the words that Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, and Moses [lit., he] performed these signs before the people. Therefore, the people believed and they know [lit., have heard] that Y^ehowah has visited the sons of Israel and that He has seen their affliction. Consequently, they bowed and prostrated [themselves].** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Obviously, Moses and Aaron need to be on the same page with the rest of the Hebrews, as Moses, at some point, will say, “Time to move out;” and they need to be ready and willing, expecting that time to come. Furthermore, this has to be all of Israel. It cannot be a situation where half of Israel is enthusiastic and ready to leave Egypt and the other half is having second thoughts. The maximum pressure of slavery placed upon the Hebrews by Egypt was necessary to give them universal motivation to leave Egypt.

We live in a fallen world and we are naturally sinful, anti-God beings. God sometimes must use pain and suffering in order to motivate us (just as a good parent must use some pain and suffering on their children in order to raise and guide them properly).

Exodus 4:29–31 **Moses and Aaron, therefore, went to Egypt and they assembled the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron said the words that Jehovah spoke to Moses and Moses performed the signs that God gave him to do. Therefore, the people believed God and they believed that Jehovah had visited the sons of Israel and had observed their afflictions. Consequently, they bowed before God, prostrating themselves.** (Kukis paraphrase)

The fundamental rallying point of the Hebrew people is around their God. However, the many plagues brought upon Egypt are done just as much for the benefit of Israel as they are for the benefit of Pharaoh. Israel must be given clear signs of God’s power in order for them to believe in Him. They *must* act as a cohesive nation. At some point, there cannot be any discussion whether or not following Moses is the prudent thing to do. Moses will say, “Let’s go,” and they must all follow him.

We do not know how much conversation took place between Moses, Aaron and the elders of Israel. In fact, we do not even know how much Moses himself said or if Aaron did all of the talking. The fact that Pharaoh would not immediately agree to what God required of him—did this even come up in this conversation? I believe that Moses and Aaron both had a fuller understanding of what would take place than did these elders (who would then pass on this information to their people).

Beginning with the next chapter, Moses and Aaron will speak directly to Pharaoh, having been cleared by the elders of the Hebrews.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines](#)

[Beginning of Document](#)

[Doctrines Covered or Alluded to](#)

[Chapters of the Bible Alluded to](#)

[Definition of Terms](#)

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[Addendum](#)

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[Exegetical Studies in Genesis](#)

A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

The idea here is, there are things which we find in this chapter which are extremely important.

Why Exodus 4 is in the Word of God

1. T
- 2.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

These are things which we learn while studying this particular chapter.

What We Learn from Exodus 4

1. T
- 2.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Many chapters of the Bible look forward to Jesus Christ in some way or another. A person or situation might foreshadow the Lord or His work on the cross (or His reign over Israel in the Millennium). The chapter may contain a prophecy about the Lord or it may, in some way, lead us toward the Lord (for instance, by means of genealogy).

Jesus Christ in Exodus 4

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Shmoop tends to be rather flippant.

Shmoop Summary of Exodus 4

Moses Becomes SuperMoses

- Moses asks God what he should do if the Israelites tell him to get lost.
- God gives Moses three miracles to perform: His staff can now turn into a snake and back into a staff; his hand can turn leprous then become healthy again; and the water that Moses draws from the Nile can turn to blood. Cool bag of miracles.
- Moses tells God that he's never been a great talker. God reminds Moses that he, God, created Moses's mouth, so it shouldn't be a big deal.

Shmoop Summary of Exodus 4

- Just to be sure Pharaoh gets the message, God appoints Aaron, Moses's brother, to speak for Moses. God says to Moses, "He [Aaron] shall serve as a mouth for you, and you shall serve as God for him" (4:16). There's a chain of command here, folks.
 - Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, gives Moses permission to go back to Egypt, and Moses takes his wife and sons (notice how we only heard about the birth of one) on a donkey. Road trip!
 - God tells Moses to use the miracles, but says, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will not let the people go" (4:21). God also threatens to kill Pharaoh's firstborn son if he doesn't let Moses do his thing.
 - Interlude time. Exodus 4:24-26 is a weird one. Here's the passage:
 - On the way, at a place where they spent the night, the Lord met him and tried to kill him. But Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched Moses' feet with it, and said, "Truly you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" So he let him alone. It was then she said, "A bridegroom of blood by circumcision."
 - Hmm. The trouble is, "him" in verse 24 could refer to Moses or Moses's son. Many scholars think that this passage is a point at which the writers wanted to replace child sacrifice with circumcision. Either way, it's a funky one, so heads up.
 - God commands Aaron to meet Moses at Mount Horeb. They hang out for a while, catch up, and then go assemble the Israelite elders. Aaron talks, Moses shows off his miracles, and the people decide that these guys should be in charge.
1. Deal.

From <https://www.shmoop.com/exodus/chapter-4-summary.html> accessed April 29, 2019.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant.

This comes from Chapter 4, entitled *The Call Of Moses - The Vision Of The Burning Bush -The Commission To Pharaoh And To Israel -And The Three "Signs," And Their Meaning Exodus 2:23; 4:17 The Exodus and The Wanderings in the Wilderness*.

Edersheim Summarizes Exodus 4

Thus the prediction clearly intimated that only after a long and severe contest Pharaoh would yield. But would the faith of Israel endure under such a trial? This is probably the meaning of Moses' next question, seemingly strange as put at this stage:

"But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, Jehovah hath not appeared unto thee." (Exodus 4:1)

To such doubts, whether on the part of Israel, of Pharaoh, or of the Egyptians, a threefold symbolical reply was now furnished, and that not only to silence those who might so object, but also for the encouragement of Moses himself. This reply involved the bestowal of power upon Moses to work miracles. We note that here, for the first time in Old Testament history, this power was bestowed upon man, and that the occasion was the first great conflict between the world and the Church. These miracles were intended to be like "a voice" from heaven, bearing direct testimony to the truth of Moses' commission. So we read in Exodus 4:8 of Israel "hearkening unto" and "believing" "the voice" of the signs, and in Psalm 105:27 (marginal reading) that Moses and Aaron "showed the words of His signs among them." But while this was the general purpose of the three signs now displayed - first to Moses himself - each had also its special reference. The first to Pharaoh, the second to Israel, and the third to the might of Egypt.

In the first sign Moses was bidden to look at the rod in his hand. It was but an ordinary shepherd's staff, At

Edersheim Summarizes Exodus 4

God's command he was to cast it on the ground, when presently it was changed into a serpent, from which Moses fled in terror. Again God commands, and as Moses seized the serpent by the tail, it once more "became a rod in his hand." The meaning of this was plain. Hitherto Moses had wielded the shepherd's crook. At God's command he was to cast it away; his calling was to be changed, and he would have to meet "the serpent" - not only the old enemy, but the might of Pharaoh, of which the serpent was the public and well-known Egyptian emblem.* "The serpent was the symbol of royal and divine power on the diadem of every Pharaoh"**- the emblem of the land, of its religion, and government.

* Scripture frequently uses the serpent as a symbol of the power hostile to the kingdom of God, and applies the figure not only to Egypt (as in Psalms 74:13; Isaiah 51:9), but also to Babylon (Isaiah 27:1).

** Speaker's Commentary, vol. 1.

At God's command, Moses next seized this serpent, when it became once more in his hand the staff with which he led his flock - only that now the flock was Israel, and the shepherd's staff the wonder-working "rod of God." (Exodus 4:20) In short, the humble shepherd, who would have fled from Pharaoh, should, through Divine strength, overcome all the might of Egypt.

The second sign shown to Moses bore direct reference to Israel. The hand which Moses was directed to put in his bosom became covered with leprosy; but the same hand, when a second time he thrust it in, was restored whole. This miraculous power of inflicting and removing a plague, universally admitted to come from God, showed that Moses could inflict and remove the severest judgments of God. But it spoke yet other "words" to the people. Israel, of whom the Lord had said unto Moses, "Carry them in thy bosom," (Numbers 11:12) was the leprous hand. But as surely and as readily as it was restored when thrust again into Moses' bosom, so would God bring them forth from the misery and desolateness of their state in Egypt, and restore them to their own land.

The third sign given to Moses, in which the water from the Nile when poured upon the ground was to become blood, would not only carry conviction to Israel, but bore special reference to the land of Egypt. The Nile, on which its whole fruitfulness depended, and which the Egyptians worshipped as divine, was to be changed into blood. Egypt and its gods were to be brought low before the absolute power which God would manifest.

These "signs," which could not be gainsaid, were surely sufficient. And yet Moses hesitated. Was he indeed the proper agent for such a work? He possessed not the eloquence whose fire kindles a nation's enthusiasm and whose force sweeps before it all obstacles. And when this objection also was answered by pointing him to the need of direct dependence on Him who could unloose the tongue and open eyes and ears, the secret reluctance of Moses broke forth in the direct request to employ some one else on such a mission. Then it was that "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses." Yet in His tender mercy He pitied and helped the weakness of His servant's faith. For this twofold purpose God announced that even then Aaron was on his way to join him, and that he would undertake the part of the work for which Moses felt himself unfit. Aaron would be alike the companion and, so to speak, "the prophet" of Moses. (Exodus 7:1) As the prophet delivers the word which he receives, so would Aaron declare the Divine message committed to Moses. "AND MOSES WENT." (Exodus 4:18)

Two points yet require brief explanation at this stage of our narrative. For, first, it would appear that the request which Moses was in the first place charged to address to Pharaoh was only for leave "to go three days journey into the wilderness," whereas it was intended that Israel should for ever leave the land of Egypt. Secondly, a Divine promise was given that Israel should "not go empty," but that God would give the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and that every woman should "borrow of her neighbor," so that they would "spoil the Egyptians."

At the outset, we observe the more than dutiful manner in which Israel was directed to act towards Pharaoh. Absolutely the king, Pharaoh had no right to detain the people in Egypt. Their fathers had avowedly come not to settle, but temporarily "to sojourn," (Genesis 47:4) and on that understanding they had been received. And now they were not only wrongfully oppressed, but unrighteously detained. But still they were not to steal away

Edersheim Summarizes Exodus 4

secretly, nor yet to attempt to raise the standard of rebellion.

Nor was the Divine power with which Moses was armed to be at the first employed either in avenging their past wrongs or in securing their liberty.

On the contrary, they were to apply to Pharaoh for permission to undertake even so harmless an expedition as a three days pilgrimage into the wilderness to sacrifice unto God - a request all the more reasonable, that Israel's sacrifices would, from a religious point of view, have been "an abomination" to the Egyptians, (Exodus 8:62) and might have led to disturbances. The same almost excess of regard for Pharaoh prompted that at the first only so moderate a demand should be made upon him. It was infinite condescension to Pharaoh's weakness, on the part of God, not to insist from the first upon the immediate and entire dismissal of Israel. Less could not have been asked than was demanded of Pharaoh, nor could obedience have been made more easy. Only the most tyrannical determination to crush the rights and convictions of the people, and the most daring defiance of Jehovah, could have prompted him to refuse such a request, and that in face of all the signs and wonders by which the mission of Moses was accredited. Thus at the first his submission was to be tried where it was easiest to render it, and where disobedience would be "without excuse."

There might have been some plea for such a man as Pharaoh to refuse at once and wholly to let those go who had so long been his bondsmen; there could be absolutely none for resisting a demand so moderate and supported by such authority. Assuredly such a man was ripe for the judgment of hardening; just as, on the other hand, if he had at the first yielded obedience to the Divine will, he would surely have been prepared to receive a further revelation of His will, and grace to submit to it. And so God in His mercy always deals with man. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." The demands of God are intended to try what is in us. It was so in the case of Adam's obedience, of Abraham's sacrifice, and now of Pharaoh; only that in the latter case. as in the promise to spare Sodom if even ten righteous men were found among its wicked inhabitants, the Divine forbearance went to the utmost verge of condescension. The same principle of government also appears in the New Testament, and explains how the Lord often first told of "earthly things," that unbelief in regard to them might convince men of their unfitness to hear of "heavenly things." Thus the young ruler (Matthew 19:16) who believed himself desirous of inheriting eternal life, and the scribe who professed readiness to follow Christ, (Matthew 8:19) had each only a test of "earthly things" proposed, and yet each failed in it. The lesson is one which may find its application in our own ease - for only "then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord."

The second difficulty about the supposed direction to Israel to "borrow jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment," and so to "spoil the Egyptians," (Exodus 3:22) rests upon a simple misunderstanding of the text. Common sense even would indicate that, under the circumstances in which the children of Israel, at the last, left the land, no Egyptian could have contemplated a temporary loan of jewels, soon to be repaid. But, in truth, the word rendered in our Authorized Version by "borrowing," does not mean a loan and is not used in that sense in a single passage in which it occurs throughout the Old Testament. It always and only means "to ask" or to request." This "request," or "demand" - as, considering the justice of the case, we should call it - was readily granted by the Egyptians. The terror of Israel had fallen on them, and instead of leaving Egypt as fugitives, they marched out like a triumphant host, carrying with them "the spoil" of their Divinely conquered enemies.

It is of more importance to notice another point. Moses was the first to bear a Divine commission to others. He was also the first to work miracles. Miracles present to us the union of the Divine and the human. All miracles pointed forward to the greatest of all miracles, "the mystery of godliness, into which angels desire to look; "the union of the Divine with the human" in its fullest appearance in the Person of the God-Man. Thus in these two aspects of his office, as well as in his mission to redeem Israel from bondage and to sanctify them unto the Lord, Moses was an eminent type of Christ.

"Wherefore" let us "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house - as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Hebrews 3:1, 2, 5, 6)

From http://philologos.org/_eb-bhot/vol_II/ch04.htm accessed February 10, 2017 (slightly edited).

CHAPTER 5

Moses Returns Into Egypt - The Dismissal Of Zipporah - Moses Meets Aaron - Their Reception By The Children Of Israel - Remarks On The Hardening Of Pharaoh's Heart

Exodus 15:17-31

SCRIPTURE-HISTORY is full of seemingly strange contrasts. Unintelligible to the superficial observer, the believing heart rejoices to trace in them, side by side, the difference between what appears to the eye of man and what really is before God; and then between the power of God, and the humbleness of the means and circumstances through which He chooses to manifest it. The object of the one is to draw out our faith, and to encourage it in circumstances which least promise success; that of the other, to give all the glory to God, and ever to direct our eye from earth to heaven. So it was, when, in the days of His flesh, neither Israel nor the Gentiles recognized the royal dignity of Christ in Him who entered Jerusalem, "meek, and riding upon an ass and the colt of an ass." And so it also appeared, when, in the simple language of Scripture, "Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand." (Exodus 4:20)

What a contrast! He who bears in his hand the rod of God is dismissed in this mean manner - his wife and sons, and all their goods laden on one ass, and himself humbly walking by their side! Who would have recognized in this humble guise him who carried that by which he would smite down the pride of Pharaoh and the might of Egypt?

On his return from "the mount of God," Moses had simply announced to his father-in-law his purpose of revisiting Egypt. Probably Jethro had not sufficient enlightenment for Moses to communicate to him the Divine vision. Besides, the relations between them at the time (as we gather even from the manner in which Jethro allowed him to depart) seem not to have been such as to invite special confidence; possibly, it might have only raised hindrances on the part of Jethro or of Zipporah. But it was an indication that God furthered his way, when alike his father-in-law and his wife so readily agreed to an expedition which, in the circumstances, might have been fraught with great danger. And this was not all. After he had resolved to go, but before he actually set out, God encouraged him by the information that all the men were dead who had sought his life. Again, while on his journey, He gave him threefold strengthening for the work before him. First, He pointed him to the Divine rod in his hand, with which he was to attest by miracles his mission to Pharaoh. (Exodus 4:21) Secondly, lest he should be discouraged by the failure of these signs to secure Pharaoh's submission, God not only foretold the hardening of the king's heart, but by saying, "I will harden his heart" (ver. 21), proved that that event also was under His own immediate control and direction. Lastly, in the message which he was to bear to Pharaoh a double assurance was conveyed (vers. 22, 23). Jehovah demanded freedom for the people, because "Israel is my son, even my firstborn," and He threatened, in case of Pharaoh's refusal, "to slay" his "son," even the king's "firstborn." So terrible a threat was to prove the earnestness of the Divine demand and purpose. On the other hand, the tide given to Israel implied that God would not leave "His firstborn" in the bondage of Egypt. In the contest with Pharaoh Jehovah would surely prevail. That precious relationship between God and His people, which was fully established in the covenant at Mount Sinai, (Exodus 19:5) might be said to have commenced with the call of Abraham. Israel was "the son of God" by election, by grace, and by adoption (Deuteronomy 32:18; Isaiah 64:8; Jeremiah 3:4; Malachi 1:6; 2:10) As such, the Lord would never withdraw His love from him, (Hosea 11:1; Jeremiah 31:9-20) but pity him even as a father his children; (Psalm 103:13) and, although He would chasten the people for their sins, yet would He not withdraw His mercy from them. Such a relationship is nowhere else in the Old Testament indicated as subsisting between God and any other nation. But it is exceedingly significant that Israel is only called "the firstborn." For this conveys that Israel was not to be alone in the family of God, but that, in accordance with the promise to Abraham, other sons should be born into the Father's house. Thus even the highest promise spoken to Israel included in it the assurance of future blessing to the Gentiles.

And yet he who was to declare Israel the heir to this precious legacy was himself at the time living in neglect of the sign of that very covenant! His own second son* had not been circumcised according to the Divine commandment (Genesis 17:14) - whether from neglect, owing to faith discouraged, or, more probably, as we

gather from the subsequent conduct of Zipporah, on account of his wife's opposition, which in his depressed circumstances he could not overcome. But judgment must begin at the house of God; and no one is fit to be employed as an instrument for God who in any way lives in neglect of His commandments. God met even His chosen servant Moses as an enemy. His life was in imminent danger, and Zipporah had to submit, however reluctantly, to the ordinance of God. But her mood and manner showed that as yet she was not prepared to be Moses' helpmate in the work before him. He seems to have understood this, and to have sent her and the children back to his father-in-law. Only at a later period, when he had "heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people," did Jethro himself bring them again to Moses. (Exodus 18:1-7)

* From Exodus 4:25, we gather that only one son required to be circumcised. This would, of course, be the younger of the two.

Thus purged from the leaven of sin, Moses continued his journey. Once more God had anticipated His servant's difficulties; we might almost say, the fulfillment of His own promises. Already He had directed Aaron **"to go into the wilderness to meet Moses."** At the mount of God the two brothers met, and Aaron willingly joined the Divine mission of Moses. Arrived in Egypt, they soon **"gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel."** At hearing of the gracious tidings which Aaron announced, and at sight of "the signs" with which he attested them, it is said, **"they bowed their heads and worshipped."** Then God had not forsaken His people whom He foreknew! So then, not Moses' unbelieving fears (4:1), but God's gracious promise (3:18), had in this respect also been amply realized. Neither their long stay in Egypt nor their bondage had extinguished their faith in the God of their fathers, or their hope of deliverance. However grievously they might afterwards err and sin, the tidings that **"Jehovah had visited"** His people came not upon them as strange or incredible. More than that, their faith was mingled with humiliation and worship.

Before we pass to an account of the wonders by which Moses was so soon to prove before Pharaoh the reality of his mission, it may be convenient here briefly to consider a very solemn element in the history of these transactions - we mean, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Not that we can ever hope fully to understand what touches the counsels of God, the administration of His government, the mysterious connection between the creature and the Creator, and the solemn judgments by which He vindicates His power over the rebellious. But a reverent consideration of some points, taken directly from the text itself, may help us at least, like Israel of old, to **"bow our heads and worship."** We have already noticed, that before Moses had returned into Egypt, (Exodus 4:21) God had declared of Pharaoh, "I will harden his heart," placing this phase in the foreground, that Moses might be assured of God's overruling will in the matter. For a similar purpose, only much more fully expressed, God now again announced to Moses, before the commencement of the ten plagues, (Exodus 7:3)

"I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt."

These are the two first statements about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. In both cases the agency is ascribed to God; but in both cases the event is yet future, and the announcement is only made in order to explain to Moses what his faith almost needed to know.

Twice ten times in the course of this history does the expression hardening occur in connection with Pharaoh. Although in our English version only the word "harden" is used, in the Hebrew original three different terms are employed, of which one (as in Exodus 7:3) literally means to make hard or insensible, the other (as in 10:1) to make heavy, that is, unimpressionable, and the third (as in 14:4), to make firm or stiff, so as to be immovable. Now it is remarkable, that of the twenty passages which speak of Pharaoh's hardening, exactly ten ascribe it to Pharaoh himself, and ten to God,* and that in both cases precisely the same three terms are used. Thus the making "hard," "heavy," and "firm" of the heart is exactly as often and in precisely the same terms traced to the agency of Pharaoh himself as to that of God. As a German writer aptly remarks, "The effect of the one is the hardening of man to his own destruction; that of the other, the hardening of man to the glory of God."

* Perhaps we ought to mark that ten is the number of completeness. The ten passages in which the hardening is traced to Pharaoh himself are: Exodus 7:13 ("the heart of Pharaoh was firm" or "stiff"); ver. 14 ("was heavy"); ver. 22 ("firm"); 8:15 ("made heavy"); ver. 19 (was "firm"); ver. 32; 9:7, 34 ("heavy"); ver. 35 ("firm"); 13:15 ("Pharaoh made hard," viz., his heart). The ten passages in which it is traced to the agency of God are: Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1; 10:20; 10:27; 11:10; 14:4; 14:8; 14:17.

Proceeding further, we find that, with the exception of the two passages (Exodus 4:21; 7:3) in which the Divine agency in hardening is beforehand announced to Moses for his instruction, the hardening process is during the course of the actual history, in the first place, traced only to Pharaoh himself. Thus, before the ten plagues, and when Aaron first proved his Divine mission by converting the rod into a serpent, (Exodus 7:10) "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened," that is, by himself (vers. 13, 14).*

* The rendering in our Authorized Version conveys a wrong impression, as if God had hardened Pharaoh's heart.

Similarly, after each of the first five plagues (7:22; 8:15; 8:19; 8:32; 9:7) the hardening is also expressly attributed to Pharaoh himself. Only when still resisting after the sixth plague do we read for the first time, that "the Lord made firm the heart of Pharaoh" (9:12). But even so, space for repentance must have been left, for after the seventh plague we read again (9:34) that "Pharaoh made heavy his heart;" and it is only after the eighth plague that the agency is exclusively ascribed to God. Moreover, we have to consider the progress of this hardening on the part of Pharaoh, by which at last his sin became ripe for judgment. It was not only that he resisted the demand of Moses, even in view of the miraculous signs by which his mission was attested; but that, step by step, the hand of God became more clearly manifest, till at last he was, by his own confession, "inexcusable." If the first sign of converting the rod into a serpent could in a certain manner be counterfeited by the Egyptian magicians, yet Aaron's rod swallowed up theirs (7:12). But after the third plague, the magicians themselves confessed their inability to carry on the contest, declaring, "This is the finger of God" (8:9). If any doubt had still been left upon his mind, it must have been removed by the evidence presented after the fifth plague (9:7), when "Pharaoh sent, and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead." Some of the Egyptians, at least, had profited by this lesson, and on the announcement of the seventh plague housed their cattle from the predicted hail and fire (9:20, 21). Lastly, after that seventh plague, Pharaoh himself acknowledged his sin and wrong (9:27), and promised to let Israel go (ver. 28). Yet after all, on its removal, he once more hardened his heart (ver. 35)!

Can we wonder that such high-handed and inexcusable rebellion should have been ripe for the judgment which appeared in the Divine hardening of his heart? Assuredly in such a contest between the pride and daring of the creature and the might of the Lord God, the truth of this Divine declaration had to be publicly manifested:

"Even for this purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Romans 9:17)

For the long-suffering and patience of God will not always wait. It is indeed most true, that "God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he be converted and live;" (Ezekiel 33:11) and that He "will have all men come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved." (1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9)

But "he that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and than without remedy." (Proverbs 29:1)

The same manifestation of God which to the believing is "a savor of life unto life," is to those who resist it "a savor of death unto death." As one has written, "the sunlight shining upon our earth produces opposite results according to the nature of the soil." In Scripture language: (Hebrews 6:7, 8) **"the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God: but that which bears thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."** Or, as a German writer puts it, "It is the curse of sin that it makes the hard heart ever harder against the gracious drawing of the Divine love, patience, and long-suffering."

Thus they who harden themselves fall at last under the Divine judgment of hardening, with all the terrible consequences which it involves.

Hitherto we have only traced this as it appears in the course of Pharaoh's history. There are, however, deeper bearings of the question, connected with the Divine dealings, the sovereignty, and the power of God. For such inquiries this is obviously not the place. Suffice it to draw some practical lessons. First and foremost, we learn the insufficiency of even the most astounding miracles to subdue the rebellious will, to change the heart, or to subject a man unto God. Our blessed Lord Himself has said of a somewhat analogous case, that men would

not believe even though one rose from the dead. (Luke 16:31) And His statement has been only too amply verified in the history of the world since His own resurrection. Religion is matter of the heart, and no intellectual conviction, without the agency Of the Holy Spirit, affects the inmost springs of our lives. Secondly, a more terrible exhibition of the daring of human pride, the confidence of worldly power, and the deceitfulness of sin than that presented by the history of this Pharaoh can scarcely be conceived. And yet the lesson seems to have been overlooked by too many! Not only sacred history but possibly our own experience may furnish instances of similar tendencies; and in the depths of his own soul each believer must have felt his danger in this respect, for "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Lastly, resistance to God must assuredly end in fearful judgment. Each conviction suppressed, each admonition stifled, each loving offer rejected, tends towards increasing spiritual insensibility, and that in which it ends. It is wisdom and safety to watch for the blessed influences of God's Spirit, and to throw open our hearts to the sunlight of His grace.

From www.biblestudytools.com/history/edersheim-old-testament/volume-2/chapter-5.html accessed February 21, 2017 (edited).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines

Beginning of Document

Doctrines Covered or Alluded to

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Definition of Terms

Introduction and Text

Addendum

www.kukis.org

Exegetical Studies in Exodus

Addendum

The Doctrine of Circumcision (by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)

1. Circumcision was established as a sign of the Abrahamic covenant, Genesis 17:1-14. Circumcision is an operation on the male phallus in which some useless skin is removed. This principle is carried into the ritual which emphasized the sanctification of the Jewish nation as a part of God's plan for the previous dispensation. Only the males had to be circumcised in Genesis 17 because only the males were responsible. Women are designed to be responders, they carry no authority except as parents. The ritual as it began in Genesis 17 was designed to set apart the Jewish nation of Israel as a part of God's plan as God's representative in the previous dispensation. Abraham was circumcised after his salvation and after receiving the covenant. It was on the reception of the Abrahamic covenant that we actually have the right of circumcision administered for the first time, Romans 4:11.
 - a. In the history of Israel there are some very dramatic moments in the field of literal circumcision. Literal circumcision represented to the Jews their responsibility before the Lord to maintain and to disseminate Bible doctrine and the principles of establishment. Moses had ignored this with regard to his own children and almost died the sin unto death for his failure to have his youngest son circumcised, Exodus 4:24-26.
 - b. Circumcision was a recognition of the role of Israel under God's grace and therefore it had great significance. Under the command given the child was circumcised on the eighth day. he had nothing to say about it. Being circumcised on the eighth day had two concepts, the coagulation of blood and the principle of grace. The child neither earned nor deserved nor worked for it, nor did his volition enter into it in any way. Therefore circumcision was of great importance in orienting to the grace of God. No Jew could partake of the Passover without circumcision, Exodus 12:48.
 - c. The Jews were placed under the fifth cycle of discipline for lack of circumcision of the soul to accompany this ritual, Jeremiah 6:10; 9:25,26. So the ritual of circumcision had both physical and spiritual connotation. At its inception we see the spiritual connotation.

2. Definition. Circumcision consists of the cutting away of the foreskin of the male phallus. The ritual indicated dedication of the male sex organ to the right woman, and no one else. It was in direct contrast with the phallic cult of heathenism which the Jews found in the land, Leviticus 12:2,3. This was the physical significance of the ritual of circumcision. It recognised that Israel would be blessed of God not only through spiritual principles but Israel would be blessed in the fact that a maximum number of Jewish males would find the one designed for them and live in great blessing. The [national, not personal] happiness of a nation and the stability of a nation depends upon a maximum number of males within that nation finding, under God's grace, their right woman. And when a maximum number of right man, right woman marriages are made that nation is stabilized, happy, and blessed.
3. The ritual of circumcision has no significance in the Church Age. By this time in our history a maximum number of people everywhere realize the value of circumcision and have followed the principle, but when males are circumcised today it has no spiritual significance in their life, 1Corinthiansinthians 7:18,19; Galatians 5:2,3.
4. Circumcision early in the Church Age became a rallying point for legalism — Acts 15:1, 24; Galatians 6:12,13.
5. Circumcision was used originally to designate the Jews by their race and by their nation, Galatians 2:8; Colossians 4:11; Ephesians 2:11; Titus 1:10. Under this phraseology the Jews are often called the circumcised.
6. Circumcision is used to portray retroactive positional truth, Colossians 2:11. Remember there are two categories of positional truth. We are identified with Christ in His death. At the point of salvation we are entered into union with Christ as He died on the cross. Bearing our sins and taking our place He rejected human good. Human good is outside of the pale of the work of Christ on the cross. He rejected human good. Human good, therefore, is equivalent to the portion of the foreskin removed in circumcision. Human good is dead and circumcision is dead, useless skin. We are also identified with Christ as He is seated at the right hand of the Father. This is current positional truth. Circumcision relates to retroactive positional truth. Therefore in portraying retroactive positional truth the ritual circumcision removes that which is unnecessary, useless. The removal of the unnecessary useless portrays what is not necessary in the Christian life. Therefore the spiritual significance of circumcision comes into focus. Today we have a spiritual circumcision whereby grace eliminates legalism — what is useless. Grace eliminates the talent of man, the ability of man, the energy of man, the plans of man. All of these form the legalistic package.
7. Circumcision is also used to portray scar tissue, emotional revolt, and reversionism, Jeremiah 6:10; 9:25,26; Ezekiel 44:7; Acts 7:51.
8. Circumcision is used to portray the function of the grace apparatus for perception Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4.
9. Circumcision is used to portray the edification complex structure with entrance into the supergrace life, Deuteronomy 30:6; Romans 2:28:29; Philippians 3:3.

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

Josephus' History of this Time Period

**CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF THREE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE YEARS.
FROM THE CREATION TO THE DEATH OF ISAAC.**

CHAPTER 12. CONCERNING THE BURNING BUSH AND THE ROD OF MOSES.

3. But God persuaded him to be courageous on all occasions, and promised to be with him, and to assist him in his words, when he was to persuade men; and in his deeds, when he was to perform wonders. He bid him also to take a signal of the truth of what he said, by throwing his rod upon the ground, which, when he had done, it crept along, and was become a serpent, and rolled itself round in its folds, and erected its head, as ready to revenge itself on such as should assault it; after which it become a rod again as it was before. After this God

Josephus' History of this Time Period

bid Moses to put his right hand into his bosom: he obeyed, and when he took it out it was white, and in color like to chalk, but afterward it returned to its wonted color again. He also, upon God's command, took some of the water that was near him, and poured it upon the ground, and saw the color was that of blood. Upon the wonder that Moses showed at these signs, God exhorted him to be of good courage, and to be assured that he would be the greatest support to him; and bid him make use of those signs, in order to obtain belief among all men, that "thou art sent by me, and dost all things according to my commands. Accordingly I enjoin thee to make no more delays, but to make haste to Egypt, and to travel night and day, and not to draw out the time, and so make the slavery of the Hebrews and their sufferings to last the longer."

4. Moses having now seen and heard these wonders that assured him of the truth of these promises of God, had no room left him to disbelieve them: he entreated him to grant him that power when he should be in Egypt; and besought him to vouchsafe him the knowledge of his own name; and since he had heard and seen him, that he would also tell him his name, that when he offered sacrifice he might invoke him by such his name in his oblations. Whereupon God declared to him his holy name, which had never been discovered to men before; concerning which it is not lawful for me to say any more⁽²⁴⁾ Now these signs accompanied Moses, not then only, but always when he prayed for them: of all which signs he attributed the firmest assent to the fire in the bush; and believing that God would be a gracious supporter to him, he hoped he should be able to deliver his own nation, and bring calamities on the Egyptians.

CHAPTER 13. HOW MOSES AND AARON RETURNED INTO EGYPT TO PHARAOH.

1. SO Moses, when he understood that the Pharaoh, in whose reign he fled away, was dead, asked leave of Raguel to go to Egypt, for the benefit of his own people. And he took with him Zipporah, the daughter of Raguel, whom he had married, and the children he had by her, Gersom and Eleazer, and made haste into Egypt. Now the former of those names, Gersom, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies that he was in a strange land; and Eleazer, that, by the assistance of the God of his fathers, he had escaped from the Egyptians. Now when they were near the borders, Aaron his brother, by the command of God, met him, to whom he declared what had befallen him at the mountain, and the commands that God had given him. But as they were going forward, the chief men among the Hebrews, having learned that they were coming, met them: to whom Moses declared the signs he had seen; and while they could not believe them, he made them see them, So they took courage at these surprising and unexpected sights, and hoped well of their entire deliverance, as believing now that God took care of their preservation.

⁽²⁴⁾ This superstitious fear of discovering the name with four letters, which of late we have been used falsely to pronounce Jehovah, but seems to have been originally pronounced Jahoh, or Jao, is never, I think, heard of till this passage of Josephus; and this superstition, in not pronouncing that name, has continued among the Rabbinical Jews to this day (though whether the Samaritans and Caraites observed it so early, does not appear). Josephus also durst not set down the very words of the ten commandments, as we shall see hereafter, Antiq. B. III. ch. 5. sect. 4, which superstitious silence I think has yet not been continued even by the Rabbins. It is, however, no doubt but both these cautious concealments were taught Josephus by the Pharisees, a body of men at once very wicked and very superstitious.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-2.htm> accessed February 21, 2017. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 1, Chapter 1.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Exodus 4

[A Reasonably Literal Translation](#)

[A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase](#)

God gives Moses 3 signs to use

A Complete Translation of Exodus 4	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
So Moses answered [God] and said, “Listen, they will not believe me and they will not listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘Y ^e howah has not appeared to you.’ ”	So Moses answered God, saying, “Listen, the people of Israel will not believe me and they will not even listen to a word I say, because they will say, ‘Jehovah did not appear to you.’ ”
Y ^e howah then said to him, “What [is] that in your hand?”	Jehovah then asked him, “What is that in your hand?”
And he answered, “A staff.”	Moses answered, “It is a staff.”
So God commanded, “Throw it to the ground.” He threw it on the ground and it became a serpent. Moses fled from it.	So God commanded, “Throw it down on the ground.” Therefore, Moses threw the staff onto the ground and it suddenly became a serpent. Suddenly frightened, Moses ran from it.
Then Y ^e howah said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take [it] by the tail—” So he stretched out his hand and he seized it and it became a staff [again] in his hand.	Then Jehovah said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and grab it by the tail—” So when Moses seized the serpent, it became a staff again in his hand.
“—so that they will be caused to believe that Y ^e howah has appeared to you—(Y ^e howah) the Elohim of their fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac and the Elohim of Jacob.”	“—this is so they will be caused to believe that Jehovah has appeared to you—Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”
And again, Y ^e howah said to him, “Take your hand [and place it] by your chest—” So he brought his hand in [by] his chest [under his clothing] and when he brought it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow.	And, Jehovah spoke to him, saying, “Place your hand under your clothing next to your chest—” So Moses brought his hand to his chest, and when brought it out again, it was leprous, white as snow.
And God [lit., <i>he</i>] said, “Return your hand to your chest—” —and he returned his hand to his chest [under his clothing] and brought it out from his chest, and saw it was restored as [the color of] his flesh.	Then God told him, “Return your hand to your chest—” And Moses again placed his hand next to his chest, under his clothing, and then brought it out again, and the normal flesh color of his hand was restored.
[And God said,] “And it will be, if they do not believe you and do not give heed regarding the voice of the first sign, then they will believe the voice of the second sign. And it is, if they do not believe even these two signs and they will not listen to your voice, then you will take water from the Nile and you will pour [it upon] dry ground, and it will be [that] the water which you have taken from the Nile, it will become blood on the dry ground.”	God then said, “It will come to pass that, if they do not believe the first sign, then they will believe the second sign. Let’s say that they do not believe these two signs and refuse to listen to your voice, then you will take some water from the Nile River and pour it upon dry ground, and this water will become blood on the dry ground.”
Moses asks God to send someone else in his stead	
Moses then said to Y ^e howah, “Please, my Adonai, I [am] not eloquent [lit., <i>a man of words</i>]; both from before and from now [as] You are speaking to Your servant, I [am] slow of speech [lit., <i>mouth</i>] and slow of tongue.”	Moses then said to Jehovah, “Please, my Lord, I cannot do this alone. I am not eloquent. Prior to this time even up until now as You speak to me, I have been slow of speech.”

A Complete Translation of Exodus 4

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
So Y ^e howah said to him, “Who makes a man’s mouth? Who makes [a man] dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not Me, Y ^e howah? Now therefore, go and I will be with your mouth and I will teach you what you will say.”	So Jehovah responded to Moses’s objections, saying, “Who makes a man’s mouth in the first place? Who makes a man dumb, deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not Me, your God? Now, go, knowing that I will be with you and I will guide you as to what you will say.”
But he said, “Please, my Adonai, send [someone else], I pray You. [Please accomplish Your work] by the hand [of another man who] you will send.”	But he said, “Please, my Lord, send someone else instead of me!”
The anger of Y ^e howah is kindled against Moses, and He said, “Is [there] not your brother Aaron, the Levite? I know that he [even] he talks a lot. And, look, he is coming out to meet you, and [when] he sees you, he will be happy in his heart.	The anger of Jehovah burned against Moses, and He said, “Don’t you have a brother, Aaron, the Levite? I am aware that he is quite the talker. And what do you know, he is coming out to meet you—right now. When he sees you, he will be overjoyed.
So you will speak to him and put the words into his mouth while I, [even] I, will be with your mouth and his mouth; and I will teach you [both] what you will do. And he [Aaron] will speak—him instead of you—to the people; and it will be, he, [even] he, will be your mouth and you, [even] you, will be his Elohim. And you will take this staff in your hand, [with] which you will perform the signs [of My power].”	This is how we will do it. You will speak to him and tell him what to say. I will be with you to guide you what what to say to him; and I will teach both of you what to do. Aaron, therefore, will speak to the people instead of you. He will be your mouth and you will be like God to him. And you will take this staff in your hand and with it, you will perform the signs I have shown you.”
God gives Moses general directions regarding what he is to do when he arrives in Egypt	
So Moses went and he returned to Jethro, his father-in-law, and he said to him, “Let me go, please, and let me return to my kinsmen who [are] in Egypt and I will see if they [are] still alive.”	Moses then went and returned to Jethro, his father-in-law, saying, “I must go, if you will allow me, to return to my kinsmen who remain in Egypt, to see if they are still alive.”
And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in [lit., to, for, regarding] peace.”	And Jethro told Moses, “Go in peace.”
And Y ^e howah said to Moses in Midian, “Go back [lit., Go, return] [to] Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are [now] dead.”	And Jehovah said to Moses, while in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all of the men who sought your life are now dead.”
So Moses took his wife and his sons, and he placed them upon a donkey and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of Elohim in his hand.	So Moses took his wife and his sons and placed them upon a donkey and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand.
Y ^e howah said to Moses, “When you go to return [to] Egypt, observe [and take note] of all the miracles I have placed into your hand—you will do them before Pharaoh. However, I, [even] I, will strengthen his heart so that he will not send the people away.	Jehovah said to Moses, “When you return to Egypt, remember all of the power that I have placed into your hand—you will do great miracles before the Pharaoh there. However, I will strengthen Pharaoh’s heart, so that he will choose not to send the people away.

A Complete Translation of Exodus 4	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
<p>And you will say to Pharaoh, ‘So Y^ehowah speaks [to you]: <i>Israel [is] My son, My firstborn; so I say to you, send My son out so that He may serve Me. And [if] you refuse to send him out, take note, I will kill your son, your firstborn.’</i>”</p>	<p>This is what you will say to Pharaoh, at the height of his negative volition. “Jehovah God says this to you: <i>Israel is My son; Israel is My firstborn. Let me make this clear: you must send My son out of Egypt in order that he serve Me. If you refuse to send him out to Me, then, take notice, I will kill your firstborn son.’</i>”</p>
Moses has neglected to circumcise one son	
<p>And it is, along [lit., <i>in, upon</i>] the way in the camp, that Y^ehowah met Moses [lit., <i>him</i>] and He sought to kill him.</p>	<p>And it came to pass that, while Moses was moving along the way and was in his camp, that Jehovah met Moses and decided to kill him.</p>
<p>Zipporah took a [sharpened] flint and cut off the foreskin of her son. She causes [it] to touch the ground towards Moses’ [lit., <i>his</i>] feet. Therefore, she said, at that time, “You [are] a bloody bridegroom to me.”</p>	<p>In order to protect her husband, Zipporah took a sharpened flint and cut off the foreskin of her son. She threw it on the ground, near Moses’ feet, saying, “You are a bloody husband to me.”</p>
<p>Consequently, God [lit., <i>He</i>] withdrew from Moses [lit., <i>him</i>]; [and] then she said, “A bloody bridegroom” regarding the circumcisions.</p>	<p>Consequently, after the circumcision, God withdrew his hand from Moses; after which she said, “You are a bloody husband to me” regarding the circumcisions.</p>
God guides Aaron to go towards Midian to meet his brother Moses	
<p>Also, Y^ehowah said to Aaron, “Go into the desert wilderness to meet Moses.” Therefore he went and met him at the mountain of Elohim; and he greeted him [there].</p>	<p>Around this same time, Jehovah spoke to Aaron, telling him to meet Moses out in the desert-wilderness. Therefore, Aaron did as he was told, and caught up with Moses at Mount Sinai, where they met and greeted one another.</p>
<p>Then Moses made known to Aaron all the words of Y^ehowah, that He had sent him; and [he made known] all of the signs which He commanded Moses [lit., <i>him</i>] [to do].</p>	<p>Then Moses explained all of Jehovah’s instructions and he told him about the signs and God commanded Moses to employ.</p>
<p>So Moses went—along with Aaron—and they assembled all of the elders [from] the sons of Israel. Then Aaron proclaimed the words that Y^ehowah spoke to Moses, and Moses [lit., <i>he</i>] performed these signs before the people.</p>	<p>Moses and Aaron, therefore, went to Egypt and they assembled the elders of the people of Israel. Aaron said the words that Jehovah spoke to Moses and Moses performed the signs that God gave him to do.</p>
<p>Therefore, the people believed and they know [lit., <i>have heard</i>] that Y^ehowah has visited the sons of Israel and that He has seen their affliction. Consequently, they bowed and prostrated [themselves].</p>	<p>Therefore, the people believed God and they believed that Jehovah had visited the sons of Israel and had observed their afflictions. Consequently, they bowed before God, prostrating themselves.</p>
Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The following Psalms would be appropriately studied at this time:

Doctrinal Teachers Who Have Taught Exodus 4

	Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
R. B. Thieme, Jr. taught this	1963 Life of Moses (#689)	#3–4	Exodus 4:1–31

R. B. Thieme, III has not taught this on any available lesson.

Word Cloud from a Reasonably Literal Paraphrase of Exodus 4



Word Cloud from Exegesis of Exodus 4⁸³

These two graphics should be very similar; this means that the exegesis of Exodus 4 has stayed on topic and has covered the information found in this chapter of the Word of God.

Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines	
Beginning of Document	Doctrines Covered or Alluded to	Chapters of the Bible Alluded to
Definition of Terms	Introduction and Text	Addendum
www.kukis.org	Exegetical Studies in Exodus	

⁸³ Some words have been left out of this graphic; including *Strong*, *BDB*, and *pronounced*.