

## CAN GOD USE ME?

### **Exodus 2:11-22**

*2* <sup>11</sup>Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to see his brothers and he observed their hard labors. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of Moses' brothers. <sup>12</sup>He looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no one else present, he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand. <sup>13</sup>And he went out the next day, and he saw two Hebrews fighting with each other. He said to the offender, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?" <sup>14</sup>The man replied, "Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do you plan to kill me like you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses became afraid and thought, "Surely, what I have done has become known." <sup>15</sup>When Pharaoh heard about this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh's presence and went to live in the land of Midian, where he sat down beside a well.

<sup>16</sup>Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. <sup>17</sup>Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. <sup>18</sup>When they returned to Reuel their father, he asked them, "How is it that you have come back so soon today?" <sup>19</sup>They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock." <sup>20</sup>Reuel said to his daughters, "Where is he? Why did you leave the man there? Invite him to eat bread with us." <sup>21</sup>Moses was content to dwell with the man; and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah in marriage. <sup>22</sup>She gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, "I have become a sojourner in a foreign land."

### **Exodus 3:1-7a, 10-4:17**

**3** Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup>There the angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire from within a bush. Moses looked and saw that, although the bush was burning with fire, the bush was not consumed. <sup>3</sup>So Moses said, "I will go over and take a look at this strange sight—why the bush is not burnt up." <sup>4</sup>When Jehovah saw that he had come over to look, God called to him from within the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses." And he said, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup>Then he said, "Do not come near. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." <sup>6</sup>Furthermore, he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup>Then Jehovah said, "I have certainly seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt... <sup>10</sup>Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

<sup>11</sup>But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" <sup>12</sup>Then he said, "I will certainly be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain." <sup>13</sup>Moses said to God, "When I come to the children of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has

sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his name? what shall I say to them?" <sup>14</sup>God said to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM." And he said, "This is what you shall say to the children of Israel: I AM has sent me to you." <sup>15</sup>Furthermore, God said to Moses, "This is what you shall say to the children of Israel: Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and this is the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. <sup>16</sup>Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me and said, I have certainly visited you and have seen what is done to you in Egypt, <sup>17</sup>and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite—to a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>18</sup>They will listen to you. Then you—you and the elders of Israel—shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him: Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Now we request that you allow us to take a three-days' journey into the wilderness, so that we may offer a sacrifice to Jehovah our God. <sup>19</sup>I know that the king of Egypt will not give you permission to go; no, not unless a mighty hand compels him to do so. <sup>20</sup>So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go. <sup>21</sup>And I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that when you leave, you will not go empty-handed. <sup>22</sup>Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing, which you shall put upon your sons and your daughters. So you will plunder the Egyptians."

**4** Then Moses responded, "But they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, Jehovah has not appeared to you." <sup>2</sup>Jehovah said to him, "What is that in your hand?" Moses answered, "A staff." <sup>3</sup>Then he said, "Throw it on the ground." So Moses threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses ran away from it. <sup>4</sup>But Jehovah said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So he reached out his hand and took hold of it, and once again it became a staff in his hand. <sup>5</sup>"This," declared Jehovah, "is so that they may believe that Jehovah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." <sup>6</sup>Furthermore, Jehovah said to him, "Now place your hand inside your robe." So he placed his hand inside his robe, and when he took it out, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. <sup>7</sup>Then he said, "Place your hand inside your robe again." So he placed his hand inside his robe again. And when he withdrew it from his robe, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh. <sup>8</sup>Jehovah said, "It shall be that if they do not believe you, nor take heed to the first sign, that they may believe this second sign. <sup>9</sup>But if they will not believe even these two signs, or accept what you say, then you shall take some water from the River and pour it on the dry ground. The water that you take from the River will become blood on the dry ground."

<sup>10</sup>Then Moses said to Jehovah, "O Lord, I am not eloquent; I never was eloquent, nor have I become eloquent since you have spoken to your servant. My speech is hesitant and my tongue is halting." <sup>11</sup>Jehovah said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who causes a man to be mute or deaf, or who gives him sight, or who makes him blind? Is it not I, Jehovah? <sup>12</sup>Now, therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and instruct you as to what to say." <sup>13</sup>Then Moses said, "O Lord, send your message by the hand of whomever you desire." <sup>14</sup>Then the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses, and he

*said, "Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Indeed, he is coming out to meet you, when he sees you, his heart will be glad. <sup>15</sup>You are to speak to him and put the words into his mouth; I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will instruct you as to what you are to do. <sup>16</sup>He will be your spokesman to the people; he will be a mouth for you, and you will be to him like God. <sup>17</sup>You shall take this staff in your hand, with which you shall perform the signs."*

## **Introduction**

There appeared a T.V. commercial for the U.S. Marines, informing us that they are looking for "a few good men." Against a dark and foreboding background, there is a life-size chessboard: the white knight on his charger does battle against the black knight. As this dramatic conflict is played out we are told that "to compete, you must be strong; to win, you must be smart." Then the picture switches from the knights doing battle on the life-size chessboard to an actual Marine wielding his shining sword, and we are told that the Marines are looking for "a few good men." The message is clear: If you are strong enough and smart enough, you can become one of them, a United States Marine. If you are strong enough and smart enough, they can use **you!**

But the "commercial" that God presents to us in Exodus is completely the opposite of that presented by the Marines. This is the message of Scripture: Before God can use a man, God must rid him of his self-resourcefulness and cause him to look to God alone for his resources. Can God use you? Yes, if you recognize your own insufficiency and rely upon God's all-sufficient grace.

### **I. God Can Use You; If You are Not Self-Willed**

When we first meet Moses, he shows himself to be a spiritually sensitive man. He recognizes his relationship to the people of God: when he was almost forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel (Acts 7:23.) He is sympathetic to their plight: *"he saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he came to his defense"* (Acts 7:24.) He even had a sense of his divine calling: he assumed that his people, Israel, understood that God was using him to rescue them (Acts 7:25.)

But Moses also proves to be a very impulsive, self-willed, self-reliant man. When he sees an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, Moses murders the Egyptian (Ex. 2:12.) When he sees two fellow Hebrews striving against one another, Moses assumes the role of arbitrator and judge (Ex. 2:13.) Then, when his efforts are not appreciated by the Hebrews, and not concealed from the Egyptians, Moses leaves Egypt for the land of Midian. Moses desired to be used by God, he sensed a divine calling, he had a real zeal, but at this point his efforts failed. He did not triumphantly lead Israel out of Egypt; on the contrary, in disgrace and humiliation, he fled from Egypt alone.

His efforts failed because at this point in his life Moses was an impulsive, self-willed, self-reliant man. He was going to accomplish the will of God and fulfill the work of God by relying upon his own wisdom and his own strength and on his own timetable. Moses had to learn that this was not the way. By way of contemporary example, two young missionaries had to learn the same lesson amidst the overflowing waters of the Amazon River. Looking back on their ordeal, one of them writes, "This divinely imposed time of fasting, deprivation, and danger had its spiritual side: During the next three days, long hours were spent in singing, reciting Scripture, confessing sins, and repenting." Both men came to realize that they had slipped into the trap of doing the Lord's work in a manner unworthy of Him, in human pride instead of in His strength. And both men recognized that lesser things had been gradually infringing on the Lord's sanctuary in their lives. Later, when the Lord had graciously brought them through their ordeal and back to the safety of their compound, one of them told his fellow missionaries, "I started out on this trip thinking I was the Lord's 'Indiana Jones' and I came home realizing I was a lot closer to being 'Balaam's donkey.' But I learned that the Lord still loved me and could use me." (POWER, 7/5/92, pp.2-ff.)

God can use you, if you are not self-willed. God can use you when you have a true (even an overwhelming) sense of what is involved in Christian service and grasp your own inadequacy for the work: *"we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup>To the one we are the stench of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is sufficient for these things?"* (2 Cor. 2:15-16.) God can use you when you have a true appreciation for the spiritual nature of the task: *"our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the powers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup>For this reason, take up the complete armor of God, so that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and to remain standing, having overcome everything"* (Eph. 6:12-13.) God can use you when you have a true understanding of the purpose of Christian service, that its objective is to promote the kingdom and glory of God, not the promoting of one's self: *"He [the Lord Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease."* (Jn. 3:30), such was the testimony of John the Baptist. God can use you when you have a true recognition of your need for divine resources and God's willingness to supply you with His resources: *"Not that we are competent to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. <sup>6</sup>He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant"* (2 Cor. 3:5-6a.) God can use you when you have a true understanding that the task must actually be accomplished by Christ Himself working in and through you: *"I worked harder than all of them—not I myself, but the grace of God that was with me"* (1 Cor. 15:10b), such is the testimony of the Apostle Paul.

## II. God Can Use You, When You are Broken

When Moses had been reduced from being a prince in Pharaoh's court to being a shepherd in the wilderness of Midian, it was then that the LORD God appeared to

him and gave him a call to divine service. When Moses had been reduced from being a man of self-confidence and human strength to being a man who was broken and very conscious of his own inability, it was then that in the sight of God he was ready for divine service.

Moses now raises the question, *"Who am I?"* (Ex. 3:11-12.) In effect, Moses is saying, "I am too insignificant and powerless to stand before the great king of Egypt and lead the whole nation of Israel out of Egypt! I am no match for the power, the wisdom, the evil of the world!"

What is God's reply to such an attitude? *"I will certainly be with you ..."* (vs. 12a.) We may also note the assurance the Lord Jesus gives to His apostles and to His church throughout the ages: *"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me... <sup>20</sup>... And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age'"* (Matt.28:18,20.)

The LORD then goes on to equip Moses with a divine sign to serve as the assurance of his divine calling: *"this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain"* (vs. 12b.) What God is telling Moses is that the confirmation of the LORD's calling comes as the result of faith and obedience. By trusting God and doing what He says, Moses will discover that God will use him to accomplish His plan for His people Israel. The accomplishment of the task becomes the assurance that the calling was of God.

Moses raises the objection, *"But they will not believe me or listen to my voice"* (Ex. 4:1.) He raises the concern that Israel will say, *"Jehovah has not appeared to you."*

What is God's reply?

First, He causes the shepherd's staff in Moses' hand to become an instrument of His divine power and grace (Ex. 4:2-5.) The shepherd's staff represented Moses' life, (it was his livelihood, his identity, his security.) At the command of God it is laid down before God and when it is retrieved it becomes the instrument of God's power and grace—to be employed by Moses in performing the mighty works of God (cp. Ex.4:17.) Note: When the staff was turned into a serpent on the ground, what was being indicated was both the exposure to demonic danger as well as the ultimate victory over the devil that God's servant would experience and witness. In this God-given sign, we may discern the power of a life surrendered to Christ, offered in service to Him: *"for me, to live is Christ"* (Phil. 1:21), and *"I can do all things through him who strengthens me"* (Phil. 4:13.)

Second, He causes Moses' hand to become leprous and then heals it again (Ex.4:6-8.) When Moses' hand is placed into his robe and exposed to his bosom as a sinful man, and member of Israel in its identify as a sinful nation, it is revealed to be leprous. But when that leprous hand is exposed to his bosom

again, this time in his capacity as the divinely appointed redeemer, (a model of what Christ Himself is,) his hand comes forth cleansed and whole. Here may we discern the power of a life that is being transformed by the Savior's grace: "... *we ... beholding ... the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from* (one degree of) *glory to* (a greater degree of) *glory ...*" (2 Cor. 3:18.)

With regard to the first two signs and their significance for the nation of Israel, (as indicated by the LORD's declaration in Ex. 4:8, "*It shall be that if they do not believe you, nor take heed to the first sign, that they may believe this second sign*"), Keil & Delitzch comment,

The object of the first miracle was to exhibit Moses as the man whom Jehovah had called to be the leader of His people; that of the second, to show that, as the messenger of Jehovah, he was furnished with the necessary power for the execution of this calling (Keil & Delitzch, *The Pentateuch, Vol. 1*; pp. 449-450.)

Third, He will cause the waters of the Nile to be turned to blood (Ex. 4:9.) The Nile was viewed by Egypt as the source of their prosperity and life; they even identified it with one of their major gods. The fact that it is turned into blood by the hand of the LORD's servant shows that the LORD is all-powerful over the gods and the nations of the world. Here is a demonstration of the power of the living God and of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: "*Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me ...'*" (Matt. 28:18.)

Moses raises a further objection, "*I am not eloquent*" (Ex. 4:10-12.) Moses says that he is not a naturally gifted speaker, nor has the LORD made him into such a speaker when He issued His call to divine service.

What is God's reply?

*"I will be with your mouth ..."* (Ex. 4:12a.) Consider the apostle Paul's testimony in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5,

*When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony of God. <sup>2</sup>I was determined to know nothing while I was with you, except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>I came to you in weakness and fear and with much trembling. <sup>4</sup>And my speech and my preaching were not characterized by persuasive wisdom, but by a demonstration of the Spirit and power; <sup>5</sup>in order that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:1-5)*

The LORD goes on to declare, "*[I will] instruct you as to what to say*" (Ex. 4:12b.) Note, the promise the Lord Jesus makes to His disciples and His church in Matthew 10:19-20,

*But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say,<sup>20</sup> for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. (Matt. 10:19-20)*

Moses finally pleads, *“O LORD, send [your message] by the hand of whomever you desire”* (Ex. 4:13-17.) What Moses is saying is, “LORD, send the man of Your choosing, but surely, that man is not me! There are others more qualified, more experienced, more prepared, more suitable.” Moses has called himself a servant of the LORD (vs. 10,) and he appears to display a great deal of humility (vs. 13.) But the fact is he has given up his ambition to serve the LORD. Do we pray, “Your will be done,” but are we too complacent or too pre-occupied with our own interests to actually **do** the will of God?

At this point the LORD became angry: *“Then the anger of Jehovah was aroused against Moses”* (vs. 14.) Addressing the faithful servant, the LORD says, *“Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will give you charge over many things. Enter into the joy of your master”* (Matt 25:21.) But in addressing the fearful and negligent servant, the LORD says, *“You wicked, lazy servant! You knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed ...<sup>30</sup>... throw that worthless servant out, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Matt. 25:26,30.)

It was when Moses was broken, when he saw himself as unable, it was then that God saw him as ready; and God refused to excuse him from divine service. God can use you; when you are broken. When you acutely sense your personal inability, then you are then ready for divine service. But do not anger God by appealing to your inability as an excuse from divine service.

## **Conclusion**

In their commercial, the Marines tell you that if you are strong enough and smart enough, you can become one of them: a United States Marine. But the “commercial” God presents to us in Exodus 2-4 (the call of Moses) is the complete opposite of that presented by the Marines. Before God can use a man, God must rid him of his self-resourcefulness and cause him to look to God alone for his resources. Can God use you? Yes, if you recognize your own insufficiency, and if you are willing to rely upon God’s all-sufficiency.