

“I Can’t < I AM (Part 1)” – Exodus 3:18-4:12

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com.]

Meet me in Exodus 3...

Once again we are considering one of the most famous scenes in the OT—the commissioning of Moses. God appears to Moses in a burning bush and reveals to the terrified shepherd that salvation was coming for the people of God enslaved in Egypt. God calls Moses to go and deliver the message to Egypt and bring the emancipated people back to the mountain of God that they might worship their redeeming God.

We explored how the God who commissions Moses is the same God who commissions us, in the Great Commission, to make disciples of all nations. There are many points of contact between the way God commissions Moses and the way He has commissioned us, not least of which are the various things that God provides to those whom He sends. Everyone God saves, He sends out on mission. But He promises to be with them. His commission is always accompanied by His promised provisions. So, for example, we saw that...

God Provides the Credentials (3:11-12a)

That is to say, the résumé and abilities of the one sent are not all that important. What matters is the résumé and abilities of the One who sends. Why? Because that One, God Himself, promises to be with Moses along the way and He promises to be with us every step of the way as well. Next we considered how...

God Provides the Confirmation (3:12b)

For Moses the confirmation of his calling would come after he stepped out in obedience and faith. But God would assure Moses that He was doing God’s will as the events of the Exodus unfolded. By the end of the story, there would be no denying that God was with Moses. Finally, I explained last week that...

God Provides the Content (3:13-17)

Everything that Moses would need to do and say, God provided. He didn’t leave it to Moses to sort out. He revealed His name and His message and Moses was simply to pass it along as an obedient servant. The same is true for us. In the Great Commission God has called us to teach people to observe everything that Jesus has commanded. We, like Moses, are to stick to the script of God’s Word. There is no pressure to come up with a message. God has provided the message, summed up in the Gospel itself.

There is one more provision from chapter 3 that I didn’t have time to mention last week, so let me mention it now...

God Provides the Conclusion (3:18-22)

I mean that God assures Moses (and us) the ultimate outcome. Maybe not all the details. But He opens a window to see how it all will play out in the end. Let me show you what I mean. After God gives Moses

the message that he is to deliver to the elders of Israel, He tells Moses how they are going to respond and what will take place after that. Look beginning in verse 18. Follow along as I read. This is God's Word...

“And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.²¹ And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty,²² but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.” (Exodus 3:18-22)

So God tells Moses how the leaders of Israel will respond to the message, what they are going to do as a result, how the Pharaoh will respond to God's intentions, what God is going to do in response to the Pharaoh's hard heart, how the Pharaoh's defiance will be broken and he will let the people go, and God even explains how they will depart as victors with the spoils of battle (only the battle was fought and won by God, not by the Israelites). This is pretty specific. And it will all come to pass. God provides Moses with the conclusion, some insight into how it all is going to play out.

Interestingly, the same is true for us. God has commissioned us to make disciples of all nations, a huge task. But God has also assured us that He is going to redeem people from every people group. That at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. His Lordship will be acknowledged by all, whether redeemed or condemned. God has told us that He will accomplish this through His Holy Spirit working in the hearts of His people to proclaim the Gospel to the nations. And God has assured us of many other things regarding the outcome of His redemptive plan that He has commissioned us to get the word out about. Just like Moses, we don't know all the particulars. But we have been given the highlights of history's conclusion so that we can experience the obedience of faith that flows from this assurance.

It's election season in our country so there is no shortage of examples of political figures writing checks with their mouth that they have neither the intention nor ability to cash. But they make big promises nonetheless. Even if they are well-intentioned, very few politicians actually deliver on their promises. Ultimately our hope doesn't rest in them. As Christians, our hope is in Christ. Politicians will fail us. Christ will not. Part of the reason politicians fail us is because we expect too much of them when in fact they lack the power to make their agendas a reality by themselves. But with God there is no such thing as an empty promise. Every promise He makes is backed by His sovereignty and power.² When He tells us the ending of the story, nothing can thwart His resolve. When He reveals the outcome, we can bank on it and find the courage of faith to obey His call.

So Moses wasn't *just* commissioned and neither were we. Together God has provided us the credentials, confirmation, content, and conclusion that we will need to trust Him so we can ultimately obey His instruction. What a gracious God we serve! He provides all that we need. You might expect Moses to respond to all of this providence with a hardy, “Amen! When do I start?” But, in fact, Moses is more like us than perhaps we imagine. In the face of all of these provisions, Moses acts like he didn't hear anything God just said and he circles back to the same insecurities. Amazingly, God demonstrates His great patience and speaks to Moses' concerns. That brings us to chapter 4. There is really not any new provisions per se, but there is further elaborations of what God has already promised. You'll see what I mean as we go along.

Basically, there are three “I can't” statements that Moses throws back at God in chapter 4. Let's take a look at the first one...

I Can't Convince (4:1-9)

Look at the first verse of chapter 4...

“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.’”’ (Exodus 4:1)

Here we see a reluctance that is built on a misunderstanding that a lot of us can relate to. Moses is concerned that he will not be able to convince the people. He can't make them believe in their heart that God has sent Him and desires to save them. He's not wrong. He can't convince their hearts. He can't make them believe. What's the misunderstanding then? That God expected Moses to produce belief in their heart. That's God's job, not Moses. God makes converts, not messengers. God changes hearts. God effects belief. When we forget this we end up putting the burden of conversion on our shoulders instead of recognizing that heart change is always God's job.

God already assured Moses how people would respond—at least the elders and the Pharaoh—but apparently Moses wasn't listening. As a result Moses is looking at himself to accomplish something God never expected him to accomplish. Moses is right to conclude that he could never convince the people. He was wrong to suppose that his inability mattered.

In my experience one of the main reasons that Christians fail to share the Gospel with other people is they have failed to distinguish what their role is in evangelism and what God's role is. When you confuse the two you can end up assuming the wrong role. You begin to imagine that your role is God's role. In particular, we begin to imagine that our job is to convert people. No wonder evangelism strikes so much fear in your heart! We think, “I'm not sure I can convince that person that the Gospel is true. What if he asks me a question I don't know the answer to? What if he thinks I'm crazy? What if he rejects me because I'm not a very good messenger?”

Friends, that's the same logic Moses is articulating here at the beginning of Exodus 4. But what if I told you that God doesn't expect you to convince that person? What if I told you that was God's job? What if I told you that if it is God's job to convince, convert, and change a heart, then if it doesn't happen when you share the Gospel that doesn't mean you have failed to do what God has called you to do? Your job is to share the Gospel. It's on God to work faith in the human heart and produce an openness to the message.

Let me give you an example from the book of Acts. It's found in Acts 16 and it involves the conversion of a very interesting woman in church history by the name of Lydia. She was among the first Christian converts in the city of Philippi. Paul and Silas arrive there and this is Luke's account of what happened:

“...on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. ¹⁴ One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God [i.e., a Jew]. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵ And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ And she prevailed upon us.” (Acts 16:13-15)

So think about the order of events here. Paul and Silas preached the Gospel to her. We don't know the particulars of the conversation, but clearly they told her about the Jesus Christ accomplished for the salvation of those who believe. Then what? She believed. Well, yes, but there's another detail before that. Verse 14 tells us that, “*The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.*” Then what?

She is baptized, which implies that she put her faith in Jesus Christ and became a disciple of Christ. Her household proved to be receptive to the Gospel as well. All of them are baptized. And she invited Paul and Silas to her home. These are the beginnings of the Philippian church. Scholars sometimes refer to the three “openings” described in these verses—the Christian messenger opened his mouth, the Lord opened Lydia’s heart, and she opened her home.³

But here’s what I want to draw attention to—for her to believe, the Lord had to first open her heart. That’s what the text says. Without that there is no conversion of Lydia. That’s a reminder that God’s job is to open a mind and heart to the truth of the Gospel. If God didn’t do that, Lydia would not have paid attention. What happens if we forget this? We end up in the same place that Moses was. We don’t deliver the message because we have assumed their conversion rests on our abilities or eloquence and we don’t feel up to the task. We make excuses. We sit out the calling. Or we assume that we just need to be more convincing and we experience a new set of temptations. As Eric Raymond explains, “If we think it is our part to do the whole thing we will be crushed by the responsibility, and be consumed with the guilt and anxiety about our gospel witness. We will also be tempted to twist the gospel, or use manipulative techniques in order to get a ‘result.’”⁴ Because Paul understood that it’s God’s job to convince the mind and heart and our job to simply deliver the Gospel message that God has entrusted us with, he could write this to the Corinthians:

“Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. ² But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:1-2)

Did you hear that? If you forget that God has to change the heart, then you will be tempted to change the message of the God to make it more convincing in your estimation. Paul’s saying, we don’t do that! God gives the message. Our job is to deliver it. “But, Paul, what if they don’t believe it?” The next verse...

“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (4:3-4)

Pause. What did Paul just say? He said that unbelievers can’t see the truth of the Gospel because they have been blinded by the evil one. The Gospel is veiled to them. Blind men can’t see. Someone has to lift the veil and give them light. And guess what? That’s God’s job. Paul continues,

“For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. ⁶ For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (4:5-6)

Do you see? We are blind to the truth of the Gospel until God shines light into our heart. When that happens we, like Lydia, come to a knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Our part is share the Gospel. God’s part is to convince the heart. If we forget our part then we won’t reach out because we don’t think God wants us to. If we forget God’s part then we won’t reach out because we are afraid we can’t be convincing (like Moses) or we will manipulate the message but never produce the desired result. God does His work in hearts as His people open their mouth and deliver the message God has told them to pass on.

If only Moses realized this! If only we would realize this! Isn’t it a liberating thought? If this is true, then what does success for Moses in Egypt look like and what does success for us in evangelism look like? Success equals faithfulness. Success is being faithful to deliver the message God has called us to deliver

not some arbitrary view of achieving certain results or some number of “decisions.” Our confidence in the work of evangelism doesn’t derive from how confident we are in our abilities as witnesses. Our confidence in evangelism comes from our confidence in the God who changes heart, the God who has told us the ending, the God who has said, *“faith comes through hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ”* (Romans 10:17), the God who has assured us that the Gospel is *“the power of God”* that saves (Romans 1:16). Our hope rests in Him. We trust in Him, not ourselves. We recognize His job and we believe 100% that He is up for the task. Rico Tice puts it this way,

“Our job is not to convert people. It is to witness to Christ. Conversion isn’t the mark of successful witness—witnessing is. Think about a courtroom. Witnesses are there to tell the truth. That’s successful witness. If the jury don’t believe them, that’s not their fault or their failure. You have not failed if you explain the gospel and are rejected. You have failed if you don’t try.”⁵

That’s exactly right. Likewise, Moses would not have failed if he went to Egypt, delivered the message God gave him to speak, and no one believed him. That’s not failure. That’s faithfulness. The failure we are seeing in Exodus 4 is that Moses has failed to recognize God’s job and, worse, Moses is ignoring what God had just told him was going to happen when Moses obeyed. It’s like Moses wasn’t listening. And if he was listening, he’s displaying a lack of faith in God. He is explicitly contradicting what God just said back in Exodus 3:18. God said the elders are going to listen to Moses and Moses’ response was, “Okay, yeah, but what if they don’t?” It’s not Moses’ best moment.

Yet in God’s mercy, God gives Moses three signs that will be convincing to the Israelites. These signs will be the means that God (not Moses) uses to convince their hearts. Three miracles. Now it’s worth pausing to note that this is the first time God has given someone the ability to perform miracles of this sort. We sometimes assume that the Bible presents miracles as an everyday occurrence back in the day, but that’s actually not the case. They are pretty rare in fact. Generally speaking, they are connected to revelation and pop up in clusters at key moments in history.⁶ This is one such moment. As one writer explains, “God is giving these signs to Moses, not so as to impress people in the abstract...but to confirm the truthfulness of the word spoken through Moses.”⁷ They are not just cool tricks. As C. S. Lewis famously said, our God doesn’t “perform parlor tricks.”⁸ They are meant to point beyond themselves to the truth of the message and the power of the one who speaks through the messenger, God Himself. Through them God was saying, “My Word is true and its credibility does not rest in the end on the credibility of the messenger but on the credibility of the God whose Word it is.”⁹ And the signs themselves communicate truth.

So what are these three miraculous signs and what do they teach us? Let’s look at each real quick. Look at verse 2.

“The LORD said to him, ‘What is that in your hand?’ He said, ‘A staff.’³ And he said, ‘Throw it on the ground.’ So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it.⁴ But the LORD said to Moses, ‘Put out your hand and catch it by the tail’—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand—⁵ ‘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.’”
(Exodus 4:2-5)

For what it’s worth, I would have ran too. In any case, there’s a piece of background that is critical for understanding these verses. Back then the snake, and particularly the cobra, was a symbol of Egyptian power. You have probably seen crowns or sarcophagi that present the pharaohs with crowns that have a cobra at the center. Why? Because the cobra represented the Pharaoh’s power and sovereignty and by extension the power of Egypt. The cobra also figures prominently in Egyptian hieroglyphics as well. So when the staff turns to a snake that snake, in all likelihood, represents Egypt. Not surprisingly, Moses who is terrified of going to Egypt, hits the deck at the first sight of the snake.

But then God asks Moses to take hold of the tail of the snake. Now I'm no Charismatic snake charmer (I know that may surprise some of you), but it seems pretty obvious that if you are going to take hold of a snake you don't grab it by the tail. Why? Because it's head will whip back and strike you before you can say, "Oops." The logical place would be to grab it behind it's head (though I don't plan on ever putting that theory to the test).¹⁰ But Moses listens to God's instruction and sure enough the snake turns back to a staff.¹¹

What's God saying through this miracle? It's an object lesson. Moses (and eventually the Israelites) learns that there is no need to fear the might Egypt. God can reduce the Egyptians to nothing. God is the true sovereign. There is no competition. God is King of the world, not Pharaoh. And in this sign God's redemption is playing out in miniature. What do I mean? Well it's easy to miss in English, but there is a bit of a word-play here.

Look back at Exodus 3:20. God says, "*I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt*". Literally, it says, "I will send out my hand," using the same verb we see at the end of the verse when it says that Pharaoh "*will let you go*", or, more literally, "he will send you out." So the idea is that God will stretch out His hand so that Pharaoh will stretch out his hand. The first is the cause of the second.¹² The first is an act of judgment. The second an act of "please leave now because I've had enough." When God makes the staff turn to a snake in chapter 4, He tells Moses to "*Put out your hand*", same verb, to grab the snake. When he does, the snake is reduced to nothing and returns to a staff in Moses' hand. So the miracle of the staff points to the message that God previously gave Moses. It's a picture of what God is going to do to Egypt when He stretches out His hand against them. It strikes fear into the Egyptians and brings hope to the Hebrews.

What about the second miraculous sign? Look at verse 6.

"Again, the LORD said to him, 'Put your hand inside your cloak.' And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow."⁷ Then God said, 'Put your hand back inside your cloak.' So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh." (Exodus 4:6-7)

That will make you think twice about getting dressed in the morning. "Let me just grab my cloak...ahh...on second thought..." The word here for leprosy can describe any number of incurable skin diseases, not necessarily what we think of as leprosy (or Hansen's disease). But when Moses will do this sign before the people it communicates that God has the power over life and death. He can afflict and heal. He judges and He delivers. The plagues will reinforce that message. But look at the third sign in verse 8...

"If they will not believe you,' God said, 'or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign.⁹ 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.'" (Exodus 4:8-9)

You might remember, several sermons ago, I told you that the Egyptians worshiped the Nile. It was considered a god. It was the source of their blessings, because of the way its flooding sustained the people by keeping the land fertile. But now, with a mere word or act, God reduces the Nile to poison.¹³ God is demonstrating the impotence of the Egyptian gods. In an instant, God could transform the Egyptians' source of life into a source of death. This will be the first plague in Egypt.

Beside Moses, who were these signs intended to convince? God's people. Did they? Yes. Look at the last two verses of the chapter...

“Aaron spoke all the words that the LORD had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. 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.” (Exodus 4:30-31)

So, notice again, what was it that convinced them? Was it Moses or Aaron? Not really. It was the word of the LORD and the signs, all of which God provided for Moses and used to convince His people. But the context is clear. These signs are meant to be compelling for God’s people, not for the Egyptians. Not for the enemies of God. How would these enemies respond to God’s Word and signs? Not well. In chapter 7, we discover that Moses will give the signs to Pharaoh too but in each case his heart remained unchanged. Does that mean God failed? No. These signs were not meant to convince him. They were meant to be convincing to God’s people. God already told Moses that the Pharaoh was not going to listen and that God had other plans for Pharaoh.

But here is the point... The same signs were given to God’s people and to the Egyptians who oppressed them. Same deed. Same signs. Same miracles. Two very different results. The people of God believed. Those who were not the people of God did not. Isn’t that interesting. Why does it matter? Well it matters, of course, because Paul says it matters in the New Testament (but we will bring that up another Sunday). But it also matters, as J. Ligon Duncan points out, because

“It’s a standing reminder to us that there is no human instrumentality, nor is there even some sort of supernatural witness or sign that in and of itself will produce belief. The production of belief is the work of God the Holy Spirit in the heart of the human being. And no matter how great the miracle, the miracle in and of itself is incapable of producing the conviction and belief. Only God Himself directly does that with the heart. Same miracles, two different results.”¹⁴

Once again, we are back at the idea. Our job is the same as Moses’—deliver the message and point to the signs. If we do that God will save people and transform hearts. But it won’t happen to every heart. But it will happen in every believer’s heart. And it only happens, by God’s design, when we deliver the message and point to the sign He’s given us.

What’s the message? It’s the message of the Gospel. It’s the good news that God has made a way for people who deserve to forever perish apart from God because of sin and defiance to be cleansed of their sin and brought into relationship with God. That way is Jesus Christ. He came to earth. He lived the perfect life we fail to live. He substituted Himself on the cross. On the cross He bore our sin and the wrath of God that sin deserves. Three days later He rose from the dead victorious over sin. He lives today and saves all those who have faith in Him, that is, all those who turn from their sin and self-reliance and trust in Jesus alone to save them. That’s the Gospel that has been entrusted to us and it is the power of God unto salvation. We have been called by God in the Great Commission to carry that message to the nations and everyone we come in contact with who has a pulse. When we do God uses that message to awaken faith and to save sinners, just like He did for us when we first grasped the message.

And what’s the sign God has given us? Is it not the resurrection? Is it not the empty tomb? Did Jesus not say, *“An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”* (Matthew 12:39-40; cf. 1 Cor. 1:22-24)? That’s the sign that Jesus entrusted us. We tell the world that Christ is risen and the grave is empty because if Christ is not risen no one has any hope beyond the grave (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:12ff).

When we pass along the message of the Gospel and we point to the sign of the Resurrection, God has assured us, just like Moses, that He will convince and save some. Put it to the test. He will bring some from

death to life. But He never said that he would bring all from death to life. In fact, He said that some will never be convinced by any sign and some will never be awakened to faith by the Gospel. It's foolishness to those who will perish, it's a stumbling block (1 Corinthians 1:18, 23). But that's not our job to awaken their hearts. That's God's job. He will do it well and He will do it rightly. He is just. Our job is to obey Him by proclaiming the Gospel and pointing the power of the resurrection.

So what are you waiting for? Don't be like Moses in this scene. You don't need to prove the truthfulness of the message. The final proof has already been given in the resurrection. You just need to proclaim the Gospel and proclaim that the Gospel is true because God has raised Jesus from the dead. So, yes, employ apologetics, answer questions, work through objections, all of that. But don't forget, you yourself will never convince anyone to have faith. God has to do that. He does it through the Gospel. That's where the power is. So don't neglect the very calling God has placed on your life. Like I tell you all the time, the Gospel came to you because it was heading to someone else. Don't clog up the pipeline with your excuses. Trust the Lord. Obey Him.

Unfortunately, Moses is not quite done with his excuses (as we will see next week)...But you can be...

Let's pray...

¹ John D. Currid writes, "How are we to understand this request? God's intentions are ultimately to deliver the Hebrews from Egypt, so is he condoning deceit here? Is this an attempt to fool Pharaoh with divine trickery? Absolutely not. The Hebrews are to go to the Egyptian king with a reasonable and humble request. Pharaoh's denial of such a simple demand exposes his true nature as a wicked, tyrannical ruler. It is to show the Hebrews what they are really up against." John D. Currid, *Exodus – Volume I* (EPSC; Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2000, repr. 2014), 86.

² Anthony T. Selvaggio, *From Bondage to Liberty: The Gospel According to Moses* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2014), 51-52.

³ Erik Raymond, *Gospel Shaped Outreach: What Kind of Church Should We Be? – Leader's Guide* (The Gospel Coalition/The Good Book Company, 2015), 108.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 109.

⁶ Not surprisingly we see an explosion of miracles in Jesus' day because that is the most significant moment in human history. Jesus used His miracles in the same way. They pointed to the truth of His message and they pointed to realities about His own divine nature and calling. In fact, often times Jesus' miracles were referred to as signs (cf. John's Gospel) because they didn't terminate on themselves. They "signified" who He was. They pointed to these more crucial realities.

⁷ J. Ligon Duncan, "Signs and Wonders for Moses," preached to First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Mississippi, on December 3, 2000.

⁸ As cited in Selvaggio, 62.

⁹ David Strain, "Anyone But Me!," a sermon preached to First Presbyterian in Jackson, Mississippi, on October 19, 2014.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Drawing on the observations of John I. Durham (*Exodus* [WBC; Waco: Word, 1987], 45), Philip Ryken writes, "It took faith to pick it back up again, especially because grabbing the snake's tail left him vulnerable to snakebite. The original Hebrew gives a hint how tentatively Moses reached for it. When God told him to take the serpent by the tail, he used a word that means to 'take hold of' something firmly. But when the Bible describes what Moses actually did, it uses the word that means 'to snatch at' or 'to grab cautiously.'" Philip Graham Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory* (Preaching the Word; Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 109.

¹² Currid, 87.

¹³ Strain, "Anyone But Me!"

¹⁴ Duncan, "Signs and Wonders for Moses."