

Series: Exodus  
Title: The Rod of God  
Text: Exodus 4: 1-5  
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As Moses was leading his father-in-laws sheep in the backside of the desert, the LORD God appeared to Moses. The LORD declared he was sending Moses into Egypt to deliver his people out of bondage. The LORD assured Moses *he* would be with Moses. He told Moses everything he would do. And the LORD assured Moses that the elders of Israel would hearken to his voice.

**Exodus 4: 1: 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.**

So the LORD gave Moses power to work three signs. The LORD assured Moses these signs will convince the children of Israel that Moses had appeared unto him.

We will look at the first sign: The Rod of God.

**Proposition:** This sign typifies the gospel of Christ and that which God effectually works in those who hear it.

Moses is being sent to declare the name of God to deliver Israel out of bondage so he needs power and wisdom. So God shows him a rod typifying the Rod of God, the gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation.

**Exodus 4: 2: And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. 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. 4: 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: 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, hath appeared unto thee;**

## **A SHEPHERD'S STAFF**

**Exodus 4: 2: And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.**

This rod was the shepherd's staff Moses was using to lead his father-in-laws sheep. The staff is an appropriate type of the gospel of Christ because through the preaching of the gospel Christ calls and leads his own sheep. We find this type used many times in scripture.

The shepherd's rod was used under the old covenant concerning the tithing of a man's sheep.

Leviticus 27: 32: And concerning the tithing of the herd, or of the flock, *even* of whatsoever passeth under **the rod**, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

Christ brings all his sheep under the rod—under the preaching of Christ crucified. Through the preaching of Christ, the Spirit of God sanctifies us in our hearts, separating us out of the world, making us holy unto the LORD.

Again, in Micah 7, we find Christ our Shepherd using the rod to do what Christ does through the preaching of his person and work.

Micah 7: 14: Feed thy people with **thy rod**, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the mist of Carmel: let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.

Through the rod of God—the preaching of the gospel of Christ and him crucified—Christ feeds his people and rules in our hearts.

Then the most familiar example of the rod of God as a type of the gospel is found in Psalm 23 where Christ is exalted as our Shepherd.

Psalm 23: 4: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; **thy rod and thy staff** they comfort me.

Christ is the good Shepherd. His sheep are the elect chosen of God, given him before the world was made. He uses his rod—the preaching of the gospel of Christ—to comfort us by making us experience his presence, his power and his protection.

## **WE MUST HEAR THE GOSPEL**

**Exodus 4: 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.**

We see why God's elect must hear the gospel of Christ. In scripture, the serpent represents the devil and sin. The serpent beguiled our mother Eve in the garden. The snakes bite represents the poison of sin that corrupts us.

The gospel of Christ is our one weapon by which Christ overcomes the devil and overcomes sin in his people and makes his people hearken and believe his word. (2 Cor 10: 3-6) But if we cast this rod from us, without Christ, without his grace, without his power, we have no power against the devil or against sin. The serpent, the devil, would make us flee in fear like Moses fled from this serpent.

## **THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL**

**Exodus 4: 3: And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground...**

Here we see the power of the gospel. This is the substance of the message we preach.

At God's command, Moses cast the rod to the ground. Likewise, at God's command, Christ came down to this cursed earth to dwell amongst his people.

Isaiah 11:1: And there shall come forth **a rod** out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:...4:...he shall smite the earth with **the rod** of his mouth,...

The result of Christ's work is that his people are no more in danger of the old serpent the devil.

Isaiah 11: 8: The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cocatrice den. 9: They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Jeremiah 23:5: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a **righteous Branch [rod]**, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6: In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

So Christ came down to the ground like as the rod was cast on the ground. And when on the ground, God made the rod a serpent—**Exodus 4: 3...on the ground, and it became a serpent;**

Remember, the serpent represents sin! Remember the only cure for those bitten by serpents in the wilderness? A piece of brass was *made* the very thing that was killing the people—a serpent—and lifted up on a pole. When they looked to that serpent lifted up, they were healed. (Nu 21: 4-9) Christ said it typified him,

John 3: 14: And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Christ came down to this earth: made of a woman, made under the law, and:

2 Corinthians 5: 21: He made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Our Substitute was made sin for his people. He was made the very thing that was killing his people and lifted up on the cross where he was made a curse for us. Our Substitute suffered in place of his people until he completely satisfied the justice of God for his people.

When Christ satisfied the justice of God in place of his people, he destroyed the devil and his power—**Exodus 4: 4: And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take [the serpent] by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it,...**

Here is Moses—the mediator between God and the children of Israel—obeying the word of the LORD. On the cross, hanging between heaven and earth was the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. He obeyed the LORD unto the death of the cross.

As Moses laid hold of the serpent so Christ laid hold of the old serpent, the devil, and destroyed all his accusing, condemning works delivering his people.

Hebrews 2: 14: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15: And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

What was the devil's power of death? It was our sin and the law wherewith he accused us to God. Christ fulfilled the law for all God's elect so that satan cannot use the law to terrify us and condemn us anymore. Christ put away all the sin of God's elect so that satan cannot lay any sin to our charge before God.

Joshua the high priest stood before Michael the Archangel, Christ Jesus, with satan standing at his right hand to resist him by disputing about the body of Moses—the law of God. (Jude 1: 9; Zech 3: 1-4) In other words, satan was using the law to accuse Joshua of sin. Now, when satan accuses God's elect before God, Christ says, "The LORD rebuke thee." (Jude 1: 9) And the LORD God says to satan what he said when satan accused Joshua,

Zechariah 3: 2: And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

It is because Christ conquered the old serpent for his people on the cross so that the devil has nothing with which to accuse us anymore.

Revelation 12: 9: And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10: And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Romans 16:20: And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.

After the Lord finished his work on the cross and was buried in the tomb, our victorious Redeemer returned to heavens glory where he was before just as the rod returned to Moses hand like it was before—**Exodus 4: 4: And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand:**

From his holy hill of Zion at God's right hand, Christ now rules all—breaking his enemies and making his people willing in the day of his power—using the rod of God—this gospel of his successful Redemption.

Psalm 2: 6: Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7: I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8: Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession. 9: Thou shalt break them with **a rod** of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Psalms 110:1: The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. 2: The LORD shall send **the rod** of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. 3: Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Now brethren that is the power of the gospel we preach. That is the substance of our message. Christ and him crucified is the Rod in the rod of the gospel we preach.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE ROD**

**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, hath appeared unto thee.**

The purpose for which God gave Moses this rod was to set it before the children of Israel that they might believe the word of the Lord. That is the purpose of our preaching Christ and him crucified. Through the gospel of Christ, Christ rules from his throne in glory, revealing himself in our hearts, and makes his people willing to believe on him.

At first, sinners do not see any value in the gospel. In fact, they consider it foolishness. If God would have said, "Moses show them that shepherds staff, that they might believe." It would have been utter foolishness to Moses because it only appeared to him as a shepherd's staff. But after God revealed his power in that rod, Moses went forth with confidence, not with a mere staff, but "Moses took **the rod of God** in his hand." (Ex 4: 20) So it is that the gospel is foolishness to sinners. But not to those in whom God has revealed Christ through the gospel.

1 Corinthians 1: 23: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Saul of Tarsus hated the gospel. But after he met Christ and Christ revealed himself in his heart in power then Christ sent him forth to preach him. Then the apostle Paul said,

Romans 1: 16: I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Sinner, may God reveal Christ Jesus, the righteousness of God, in your heart now. May Christ make you willing to believe on him and rest from all your vain works. And brethren, may God reveal Christ to us again and make us willing to declare this good news to needy sinners. The gospel of Christ our Righteousness is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe!

**Amen!**