

Exodus 4:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֱלֹהִים בְּאַדְנִי לֹא אִישׁ דִּבְרִים אֲנִי גָם מַתָּמָל (גם מושלים גם מאי דיבר אל-עבדן כי כבד-פה וכבד לשון אני לא)—Moses' second objection: inadequate speech. **Not eloquent... slow of speech, and of a slow tongue** ("not a man of words... heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue"). This may indicate a speech impediment, trauma from his Egyptian life, or simply lack of rhetorical training for his new mission. Acts 7:22 says Moses was "mighty in words"—perhaps his 40 years in Midian cost him oratorical polish. God's response (vv. 11-12) teaches that He creates abilities and compensates for disabilities. Moses learned that God's power perfects through weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Historical Context

Egyptian court culture prized eloquence—scribes, administrators, and officials needed rhetorical skill. Moses perhaps felt inadequate returning to that context after 40 years as shepherd. Or perhaps he had actual speech difficulty (cf. 6:12, 30 where Moses mentions "uncircumcised lips"). Regardless, God used Moses' perceived weakness to showcase divine enablement—the message's power came from God, not human eloquence (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' speech difficulty encourage you that God uses weak, inadequate vessels to accomplish His purposes?
2. What perceived inadequacies in your life might God intend to use to showcase His power rather than your abilities?

Interlinear Text

אָ	וָ	שׁ	לֹא	אָדָם	אָ	וְ	אָמַר
said	And Moses	H413	unto the LORD	O	my Lord	H3808	H582
H559	H4872		H3068	H994	H136		
am not eloquent		H1697	מִתְמֻלָּל	מִתְמֻלָּל	מִשְׁלָשָׁם	מִשְׁלָשָׁם	מִשְׁלָשָׁם
		H595	H1571	H8543	H1571	neither heretofore	H1571
						H8032	
nor since	thou hast spoken	H413	unto thy servant	C	C	וְ	וְ
H227	H1696		H3588	H3588	H3515	H6310	
and of a slow	tongue	H595					
H3515	H3956						

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 1:6 (References Lord): Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

Exodus 6:12 (References Lord): And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?

Acts 7:22 (References Moses): And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

Exodus 4:1 (References Lord): 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.

2 Corinthians 11:6 (Parallel theme): But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been throughly made manifest among you in all things.

2 Corinthians 10:10 (Parallel theme): For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

Job 12:2 (Parallel theme): No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.