

Exodus 4:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

Analysis

And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod (וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו יְהוָה מַזֶּה בְּיָדְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר מִטֶּה) —God's question focuses Moses on what he already possesses. **A rod** (מִטֶּה, matteh)—the shepherd's staff, Moses' ordinary tool for 40 years. God specializes in using the ordinary—shepherd's staff, widow's mite, boy's lunch, fishermen, tax collectors. The **rod** will become the rod of God (4:20), instrument of miracles: water to blood, parting the Red Sea, striking the rock. This question teaches that God doesn't always provide new resources—He transforms what we already have when consecrated to His purposes.

Historical Context

The shepherd's rod (matteh) was typically 4-6 feet long, used for guiding, protecting, and disciplining sheep. This same Hebrew word means both "rod/staff" and "tribe" (matteh), connecting Moses' leadership tool to tribal authority. The rod becomes Moses' signature symbol throughout Exodus, wielded to demonstrate God's power over nature, empires, and spiritual forces.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What ordinary 'rod' in your hand might God want to transform for extraordinary purposes?
2. How does God's question 'What is in your hand?' challenge you to offer what you already have rather than waiting for new resources?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵל יוֹ	יְהוָה	מִזֶּה	בְּיָדְךָ
And he said	H413	And the LORD	H2088	unto him What is that in thine hand
H559		H3068		H3027
וַיֹּאמֶר	מִטָּה:			
And he said	A rod			
H559	H4294			

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 4:20 (Parallel theme): And 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 4:17 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.

Leviticus 27:32 (References Lord): And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

Isaiah 11:4 (Parallel theme): But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

Psalms 110:2 (References Lord): The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

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

Genesis 30:37 (Parallel theme): And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.

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