

Chapter 4

God's Covenant with a Nation



MOSES—Leader of God's People
God Revealed Himself to Moses
God Showed Moses His Power
Moses Took His Family and Went to Egypt
Moses Addressed the Pharaoh as God's Ambassador
Pharaoh Finally Freed the Israelites
Moses' Selfish Anger
JOSHUA--Covenant Promises Continued

MOSES—Leader of God's People

God introduced Himself to a large group of people--the Israelites--when He freed the Israelites from being slaves in Egypt. They had been praying to Him for help, and when the time was ripe for Him to step in and alleviate their predicament He did. However, even in this instance God did not approach the people as a whole yet; He directed a man named Moses to be His emissary to them and their captor, the Egyptian pharaoh.

Although Moses was a Hebrew and should have lived like a slave in Egypt like the rest of the Israelites, the former pharaoh's daughter had raised him after she found him seemingly abandoned as an infant. One day he slew an Egyptian for killing one of his own people and had to flee that pharaoh's wrath. Meanwhile that leader died and the Hebrews left there were suffering and kept crying out to God to deliver them. God heard their petitions and remembered His previous covenants so He was obligated to intervene and help them when the time was ripe.

God Revealed Himself to Moses

"Moses was tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian and he led the flock to the back of the desert and came to Hore--the mountain of God--and the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush So he looked and, behold, the bush was burning with fire but the bush was not consumed.

Then Moses said, 'I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the

bush does not burn.'

So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses.'

And he said, 'Here I am.'

Then He said, 'Do not draw yourself near this place. Take your sandals off your feet for the place where you stand is holy ground. Moreover He said, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' and Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God.

Then the Lord said, 'I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So, I have come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and to bring them out from that land to a good and large land.... Now, therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.'

But Moses said, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?'

So He said, 'I will certainly be with you and this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt you shall serve God on this mountain.'

Then Moses said to God, 'Indeed. When I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His Name?', what shall I say to them?'

And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM.' And, He said, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM sent me to you. This is My Name forever and this is My memorial to all generations.... "' (Exodus 3:1-15)

God appeared to Moses in a way that surely would excite his interest. His shape not only was awesome to behold; it was supernatural and absolutely contrary to the laws of nature. Therefore, Moses realized from the onset that the Voice that was addressing him was not Someone ordinary. Moses' first reaction was curiosity at the spectacle before him; his second was respect when a Voice from within the bush called his name, for he realized that Someone greater than he was speaking. God immediately directed Moses how to show Him respect. He also introduced Himself by sort of giving He resume to Moses--His credentials so to speak--so that Moses would recognize not only that He was supernatural but His connection to and authority over mankind as well. God claimed to be the Lord Who was bound to humanity.

Why did God choose to mention these particular men? He had chosen Abraham to be the father of the children of Israel, Isaac was his child of promise that had been the seed of that race, and Jacob was the continuing link in God's chain of association with humanity. Their faith, patience, and perseverance was the catalyst which eventually created circumstances through which God was able to send His Own Son to us as a perfect Representative of two things: (1) Himself, and (2) who we should strive to become.

When God told Moses that He was going to enlist him to join their ranks and

further His work on the earth, Moses not only was reluctant but also seemed almost to panic at the suggestion. He instantly reflected on his own personal deficiencies instead of even considering for a moment the possibility that a God Who could override natural physical laws might also be able to accomplish more than make a bush burn without the fire destroying even a single leaf. Moses even cited his flaws to God as if He hadn't already considered this when He called him.

God immediately assured Moses that He was not directing him to fulfill a calling without His Divine help. The Lord promised that He would stay with Moses constantly, with the implication that He would be present to assist him whenever he needed it. God did not expect for Moses to complete His mission without giving him the means to do it. He wanted Moses to be successful; therefore God realized that He Himself would indeed have to perform much, if not virtually all, of the work. However, as before, since He had been banished from the earth through the Adams' choosing to follow another being's directions other than His, God needed a person to carry out most of His physical work here, through their faith.

Moses asked God how he could address the children of Israel in order to convince them that he indeed had been sent to them by the Lord. When Moses wanted some proof of his authority as God's ambassador to the people, God told him to use His Name, for that was all the proof that they needed. His Name meant that He was ever existing, ever present, and all-powerful. It would endure forever and it was a testimonial of Himself to everyone, everywhere, always.

"The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And, those who know Your Name will put their trust in You. For, You, o Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You." (Psalm 9:9-10)

"And in His Name the Gentiles (i.e. non-Jews) will trust." (Matthew 12:21)

"In this manner therefore pray: Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your Name...." (Matthew 6:9)

"What is His Name and what is His Son's Name...?" (Proverbs 30:4)

"Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in Heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth." (Philippians 2:9-10)

"(Jesus) has by inheritance obtained a better Name." (Hebrews 1:4b)

God Showed Moses His Power

"I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. So, I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst and after that he will let you go. And, I will give the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians and it shall be when you go that

you shall not go away empty-handed, but every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely of her who dwells near her house, particles of silver, articles of gold and clothing and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So, you shall plunder the Egyptians.'

Then, Moses answered and said, 'But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice? Suppose they say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you!''?

So the Lord said to him, 'What is that in your hand?'

He said, 'A rod.'

And He said, 'Cast it on the ground.'

So he cast it on the ground and it became a serpent and Moses fled from it.

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Reach out your hand and take it by the tail. (And he reached out his hand and caught it and it became a rod in his hand), 'that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has appeared to you.'

Furthermore, the Lord said to him, 'Now put your hand in your bosom.'

And he put his hand in his bosom and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow.

And He said, 'Put your hand in your bosom again.'

So he put his hand in his bosom again and drew it out of his bosom and, behold, it was restored like his other flesh.

"Then it will be if they do not believe you nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. And, it shall be if they do not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land.'

Then Moses said to the Lord, 'O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant, but I am slow of speech and dull of tongue.'

So the Lord said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth? Or, Who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now, therefore, go and I will be with your mouth (Matthew 28:20) and teach you what you shall say.'

But he said, 'O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send!'

So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and He said, 'Is not Aaron of the Levites your brother? I know that he can speak well and, look, he is coming out to meet you. When he sees you he will be glad in his heart. Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth and I will teach you what you shall do so he can be your spokesman to the people and he himself will be a mouth for you and you shall be to him as God. And you shall take this rod in your hand with which you shall do the signs.'

So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, 'Please let me go and return to my brethren who are in Egypt and see whether they are still alive.'

And Jethro said to Moses, 'Go in peace.'" (Exodus 3:19--4:18)

God warned Moses that, just as he feared, the Israelites would not believe him at first so he would have to be consistent in his faith and message to them. Nevertheless, the Lord promised Moses that He would stay with him to guide him and do signs to the people that would confirm what was taking place. Those who followed God's commands given through Moses would be released from their bondage and be free and safe as long as they continued to remain faithful. Even in the desert they later had to pass through to get to the Lord's appointed home for them. We can see that God fully intended to continue His exact same relationship with believers when He spoke to Moses' successor, Joshua.

"As I was with Moses so I will be with you." (Joshua 1:5a)

"God shows personal favoritism to no man." (Galatians 2:6b)

God's Son, the Man Jesus of Nazareth, followed His Father's example in the exact manner and instructed His followers to do the same only with an expanded arena and audience. Moses was just the first of many people, including Jesus, to testify of God and His word to mankind.

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But, beware of men, for they will deliver you up in councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But, when they deliver you up do not worry about how or what you will speak, for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak. For, it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father Who speaks in you." (Matthew 10:16-20)

"He said to them, 'Go out into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. But, he who does not believe will be condemned. And, these signs will follow those who believe in My Name:

- (1) They will cast out demons.*
- (2) They will speak with new tongues.*
- (3) They will take up serpents,*
- (4) and if they drink anything deadly it will by no means hurt them.*
- (5) They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.*

So then, after the Lord had spoken to them He was received up into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through accompanying signs. Amen." (Mark 16:15-20)

God showed Moses four supernatural signs, other than the burning bush, to further demonstrate the superiority of His power over natural, earthly laws:

- (1) He turned a rod into a serpent,
- (2) He made Moses' hand leprous, and

(3) He turned water from a river into blood when Moses scooped it up and put it on dry land.

(4) Not only this, but God reversed the first two wonders.

When Moses did as he was commanded and caught a wriggling snake by its tail it instantly became a rod again. This must have been difficult, for Moses was afraid of the snake so touching it must have seemed ludicrous and something he definitely did not want to do. Additionally, the snake would have been in constant motion so it required some conscious effort to follow God's will. Also, leprosy was a very contagious, incurable, and always fatal disease, so God's curing it was from Moses' eyes not only as impossible as the other two miracles, it touched his life very personally and he really had to trust in God to cure him.

Even after witnessing and experiencing these three miracles firsthand Moses still tried to get out of going on God's mission for him. He tried to persuade Him by stating that he was ill equipped to be a spokesperson because he was not particularly articulate and likely would botch up the task. The Lord countered Moses' reluctance and evasion by telling him that since He made his mouth in the first place, He most certainly could fix it. Moses still asked God to send anyone else but him.

To counteract Moses' excuse, God pointed out that his brother, Aaron, was already fluent in his speech so he could go with Moses and translate to the Egyptians whatever God told Moses. Then Moses only would have to perform the miracles. God even pointed out to him that "coincidentally" his brother was coming out to see him that very moment. Moses relented, evidently becoming aware that God was determined for him to go and would compensate for every justification that he could come up with for not having to do the job himself. So he relented and went to his father-in-law to ask permission, which he gave.

Moses Took His Family and Went to Egypt

"The Lord said to Moses in Midian, 'Go, return to Egypt for all the men who sought your life are dead.'

Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt, and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

And, the Lord said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But, I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. Then, you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But, if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.' (Exodus 4:19-23)

Moses gathered his whole family and they all went to Egypt; he and Aaron did not go there unaccompanied. As well as talking to and proving God's will to the Israelites, the Lord directed Moses to do and say the same things in front of the Pharaoh, too. In other words, God did not just want Moses to go to the leaders of his people and for them then to take the message and signs to the king. No, God directed Moses to do it all himself. Moses not only had to have the faith to go back and face his own people (who had been jealous of him when he was living in luxury while the rest of

them lived as slaves), he had to be confident that God would be with him in front of the government from which he was a fugitive from (having murdered an Egyptian and then fled from the jurisdiction of their prosecution).

God identified with the Israelites as a human father does his own children, in this case calling them collectively His firstborn. In that society the oldest child automatically was his father's heir and therefore should be treated as such. Therefore the Egyptian Pharaoh subjecting God's children to hardship, poverty, and servitude was seen by God as doing it to Him as well. As a consequence, God told the Pharaoh that He had had enough of it, and if the man did not release His people God would retaliate with the most extreme of consequences--the life of his firstborn. The decision was up to the Pharaoh as to whatever happened next. This time they would experience the ultimate repercussion, death.

Moses Addressed the Pharaoh as God's Ambassador *(Exodus 4:29--12:28)*

At first, because the Pharaoh did not acknowledge the God of the Israelites, he retaliated against what he considered to be rebellion on the part of the people. He became furious at what he saw as merely Moses and Aaron inciting them not to work, and instead of alleviating their servitude he punished them further. He directed their taskmasters not to give them the straw necessary to make bricks any longer but force them to scrounge for it themselves, require them not only to meet their previous daily quotas but increase the output, and beat them when they could not fulfill their duties.

As a result of the fact that their situation worsened, the Israelites chose *not* to believe their message anymore. Even Moses went to the Lord and asked Him why He, not the king, was bringing the tribulation upon the people. God repeated what He had told Moses when He introduced Himself from the burning bush: He was indeed the Lord, He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that He had established His covenant with them, He had heard the groanings of their descendants, He had remembered their covenant as the children of Israel, He would deliver them out of bondage, and they would recognize and worship them. Moses again told this to the people, but this second time instead of continuing to believe in his words they looked more at the hardships they were experiencing, and closed their minds to the message.

It was after this that God told Moses to go back to the Pharaoh and show him one of the signs God had given Moses in the wilderness to convince him Who He was. The Pharaoh brought in his own sorcerers who duplicated Aaron's rod turning into a serpent, but the one from Aaron's rod devoured them all. Thinking that this magic was equal to God's miracle the Pharaoh hardened his heart even more so he still refused to let the slaves go.

God told Moses to go again to Pharaoh and tell him that if he did not let His people go this time, He would turn all of the water in Egypt to blood, everything that lived in it would die, and no one would not want to drink it. So, as Moses directed, in the sight of the king, Aaron put his rod in the river in front of them and everything that God had predicted came to pass. The magicians did the same and the Pharaoh let his heart grow even harder against God and the plight of the Israelites.

God next let the Egyptians experience several different disasters. Frogs came

up from the waters and went throughout the land, but the magicians copied this feat also. However, this time the king evidently did recognize the power behind the Lord performing the action versus men doing it because he called for Moses and Aaron and begged them to take the frogs away and he would let the Israelites go free to worship and make sacrifices to their God. However, when the Lord did as He promised and sent the frogs back into the rivers the Pharaoh changed his mind.

Next, dust turned into lice and got on every person and animal. (After this plague the Lord let only the Egyptians suffer His wrath. Flies swarmed throughout Egypt except among the Israelites. A pestilence struck among all Egyptian livestock. Severe boils broke out on both Egyptian people and their animals. Heavy hail, thunder, and fire rained over the Egyptian fields. Locusts covered the land and filled even the Egyptian houses. There was darkness for three days; no one but the Israelites had lights

After these things the Pharaoh sent for Moses and agreed to let the people go so that they all could worship and serve God. However, he was adamant that the animals had to remain in Egypt, even those for sacrifices to the Lord. Moses would not agree with this so the king sent Moses away, telling him that the next time he saw the Pharaoh's face he would die. Moses said that he would never see the king's face again and left his presence.

The Lord told Moses that He would let the Egyptians suffer one final plague, after which the pharaoh indeed would relent and let the people go free. Not only that, but he actually would force them out of his country. God also directed Moses to tell the people to ask their Egyptian neighbors for things made of silver and gold. By this time the Egyptians, even the king's servants, respected Moses and his God so they acquiesced and presented the Israeli slaves with their own personal possessions.

Then God revealed to Moses what the final plague would be: At midnight the firstborn of every single Egyptian household would die, from the animals to the servants' children, even to the Pharaoh's family. In order to escape this death sentence, the Israelites needed to show a sign of their faith in what God was about to let come to pass. The signal was that at a specified time each individual household would select a lamb without blemish and take some of its blood and smear it on the doorway of the home where they just had eaten it.

The Lord gave precise directions on how to kill, cook, and eat the sacrifice, as well as the rest of the meal, and nothing of it should remain. The blood would be the sign of faith that would shield the people who obeyed the Lord from the doom that was about to strike every family. This ceremony was to be repeated yearly as a memorial to God's greatness. The sacrifice, meal, and ceremony were to be commemorated as Passover.

Pharaoh Finally Freed the Israelites

"It came to pass at midnight, that the Lord stuck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne, to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. So, Pharaoh rose in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a household where there was not one dead.

Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night and said, 'Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel, and go serve the Lord as you have said. Also, take your flocks and your herds as you have said and be gone and bless me also.'

And the Egyptians urged the people that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, 'We shall all be dead!'

So, the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothing on their shoulders. Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing and the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus, they plundered the Egyptians.

Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds--a great deal of livestock.

And they baked unleavened cakes of dough which they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait. Nor, had they prepared provisions for themselves.

Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years, and it came to pass that at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, on that very same day, it came to pass that all the armies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." (Exodus 12:29-41)

Not only did the Pharaoh liberate the Israelite slaves and permit them to leave his country, he demanded that they go, taking everything they owned. God had revealed His power to such a degree that even the hard heart of the king could not deny His power over his own gods. Interestingly, the Pharaoh's last words to Moses and Aaron seem to reflect his growing respect for their Lord when he asked them to bless him before they left his presence. The rest of the Egyptians likewise wanted the Israelites for they feared that if the king didn't allow them to leave then, what more could they suffer? Probably even their own lives would be taken away.

It has been estimated that the total number of people who exited Egypt was about 2,000,000 in number. Even the fewest amounts of resources necessary to sustain this amount of people is staggering. They would need transportation for those who could not walk, livestock, and Passover sacrifices to the Lord. Being slaves in that country the Israelites would not have had many possessions. They certainly could not have had enough supplies for a trek across a desert. Therefore, not only did God have to work out the circumstances for the Egyptian Pharaoh to allow these people to leave that country; He somehow had to provide them with adequate supplies for the journey. He did so by giving them favor with their conquerors, so much so that the attitudes of the people who previously considered themselves to be above their slaves were the ones who ended up catering to their former underling's requests.

Note:

The journey of the Israelites to God's promised land is found throughout Exodus to Deuteronomy. God remained with them as a pillar of cloud (by day) and fire (by

night) Who guided their way to freedom and finally settled over the first tabernacle. Their adventures are not within the scope of this book; however God's covenant with them as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Law is vital to understand before anyone can even begin to comprehend more of God's revealed mystery of salvation for every human being ever born.

Moses' Selfish Anger

"Now there was no water for the congregation, so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron.

And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying, 'If only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! Why have you brought up the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness that we and our animals should die here? Any why have you made us come out of Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates. Nor is there any water to drink!'

So, Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces and the glory of the Lord appeared to them.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Take the rod and your brother Aaron, and gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes and it will yield its water. Thus, you shall bring water for them out of the rock and give drink to the congregation and their animals.'

So Moses took the rod before the Lord as He commanded him and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock.

And he said to them, 'Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?'

Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod and the water came out abundantly and the congregation and their animals drank.

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe Me to praise Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.'" (Numbers 20:2-12)

When there was no water available the people turned against Moses and complained to him. They even began to protest again about ever having left Egypt, remembering the security of captivity more than its hardships. They also conveniently forgot two other things. Their constant cries to deliver them out of slavery were what had moved God in the first place and it was their own fear and disbelief that had provoked God into prohibiting them from entering the promised land, doomed to wander in the wilderness for so long. Only Moses and Aaron went to the Lord Himself to seek help in their predicament.

As usual, the Lord told Moses precisely how to act to obtain what was necessary. However, instead of following His instructions to the letter and giving Him the glory, Moses let himself become moved by anger against the people. His frustration had little or nothing to do with them not believing in God and His abilities. Rather, Moses was provoked because they were mad at him. So, instead of carrying out his responsibility

giving praise to God, he did so with an attitude of arrogance and ridicule for their shortcomings. He struck the rock and obtained water for everyone, but in the process lost his privilege of being the person to lead him or her into the Promised Land. Thus, he died in the wilderness, only allowed to see it before they crossed over the border.

When God's Son Jesus became mad, at the moneychangers in the temple in Jerusalem for example, He did so because His Father's house was being insult, as well as the people who went there only to worship. Jesus was not upset that anyone was ridiculing Him personally. This was the difference between righteous versus unrighteous anger. One is a reaction to sin, the other a self-centered response.

JOSHUA--Covenant Promises Continued

"The Lord said to Moses, 'Take Joshua.... A man in whom is the Spirit and lay your hands on him and set him before Eleazar the priest and before the entire congregation and inaugurate him in their sight. And, you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.... So Moses did as the Lord commanded him... and he laid his hands on him just as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.' (Numbers 27:18-23)

God named Moses successor well in advance of the time he would be needed to take over as the leader of the Israelites. Joshua was not appointed by Moses to take his place, nor was he selected by a committee or even elected by the popular vote. God Himself called the next leader by looking at his heart, not by any other requirement to fill the position. As God previously told Moses concerning his faltering speech, He was capable of providing everything that Joshua needed in order to do the job once his heart was willing to yield to and be directed by His Spirit.

God then called Moses to reveal his successor to the priests and the entire congregation, lay his hands upon him, and bless his work. Moses was a major part of Joshua's training to replace him. In this way, right at the onset of his calling, Joshua was made privy to the demands of the position in plenty of time for him to train to be equipped to follow in Moses' footsteps.

"After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, saying, 'Moses My servant is dead. Now, therefore, arise, go over the Jordan, you and this entire people to the land which I am giving to them--the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you as I said to Moses.... As I was with Moses so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong, and very courageous, that may observe to do according to all the Law which Moses My servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left that you may prosper wherever you go.

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night that you may observe to do all that is written in it.

For, then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid nor be dismayed for the Lord, your God, is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:1-9)

God spoke to Joshua right after Moses was dead. God respected the authority of the previous leader, yet when he was gone the people needed another guide right away, so the Lord made a fast and smooth transition from one to the other. God told Joshua that He would be with him to direct him and the people exactly as He remained alongside Moses. God does not favor one person over another, but He does recognize and encourage our singularity and individual talents. Therefore, since what God had called Joshua to do was different from what He had asked of Moses, He helped each correspondingly. However, it was the person who changed not God. He merely adapted to each individual person and situation.

God reminded Joshua how vital studying, thinking about, and following His Law and words was to people's success because whenever they heeded His commands they stayed in line with His will and authority. However, when they strayed even a bit to the left or the right of God's directives they put themselves out of His jurisdiction for awhile and could not expect His responding to anything that violated His words. In effect, they became like a derailed train. Even if it remains right next to the rails that are designed to support it, if the vehicle wants to proceed to its originally intended destination it must get back on the correct track.

The natural evolution of remaining within what God wants for our lives is prosperity, success in good endeavors, strength, courage, and faith over fear, and lack of anxiety and panic about the present and future. These characteristics also would have to include patience, endurance, and perseverance to be able to withstand and ultimately triumph over anything that happens to a person for him/her to be able to overcome whatever is contrary to God's stated will.