

AUTHORITY TO BREAK

A Devotional Meditation on Vaera (And I Appeared)

Exodus 6:2-9:35; Ezekiel 28:25-29:21

Genesis 1:28; Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6; Matthew 23:29-39, 28:16-20

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When we leave our dog alone at home, I sometimes say to her, “Blue, you’re in charge. Don’t break anything.” I’ve said that so often that it’s something of a ritual. Whatever Blue may understand of my words, she will still do what she wants, and what her dog nature moves her to do. Usually that means sitting quietly at her comfortable spot and waiting for me to get home. She is probably sitting sadly as well, since she mopes when I’m away. I suppose there are also times when she reacts to something alarming, and barks a warning to anyone who is listening. At other times, she might react by hiding under the table. That’s what happens during thunderstorms, or on holidays when people celebrate with fireworks. She doesn’t like that kind of noise. Usually, Blue does well enough with “being in charge.” On occasion, though, we come home to find something amiss, such as bedsheets, hats, and socks chewed to pieces. That’s why Blue has lost the privileged access to the whole house when we are not at home.



Is that how we are with our Creator? When He made this world, He put us humans in charge and left us to our own devices to see how we would handle the responsibility. When we made a mess of things, He promised to fix it, and then He left us to our own devices once again – although without the privileged access we had previously enjoyed to Him and to His beautiful garden. After a time, He did come to fix the mess, and set things in motion for our full restoration. Then He went away again, saying, in essence, “You’re in charge; don’t break anything.” That’s one way to consider Messiah Yeshua’s instructions after His resurrection:

Now the eleven disciples went to the Galilee, to the mountain *Yeshua* had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped; but some wavered. And *Yeshua* came up to them and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the *Ruach ha-Kodesh* [Holy Spirit], teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And remember! I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:17-20 TLV

My military mind interprets this as a delegation of authority. A few weeks earlier, people had asked Yeshua what authority He had to upset the established order. He didn’t answer directly, but by the time His disciples heard these words, they understood that His authority came from the God Who kills and makes alive. They knew that because they had witnessed their Messiah being killed and returning to life. Having accepted the

evidence of their eyes and hearts and minds, how could they question His claim to have all authority in heaven and on earth? And how could they refuse the delegation of that authority to them to tell the world how God had fixed our mess, and how not to break things again?

Divine authority is not a thing to be flaunted, usurped, or ignored. It is a thing to be feared – especially for those to whom the Creator has delegated it. That’s clear from the account of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt. God started by delegating His authority to Moses and Aaron, putting them in charge of the deliverance process:

Then *ADONAI* spoke to Moses and to Aaron and gave to them a charge for *Bnei-Yisrael* [Children of Israel] and Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring *Bnei-Yisrael* out of the land of Egypt.

Exodus 6:13 TLV

We are so familiar with this story that we don’t grasp the full meaning of that word, “charge.” One commentary says, “It reflects a firmly structured society in which people were responsible to their right to rule by God’s command.”*

That should tell us something about our Creator’s intent. He sets people in position to act in His place, speaking as His voice, and accomplishing the works He has decreed as if it were He Himself doing those works. He doesn’t confer authority just to have us sit around as pampered pets, waiting to be fed and let out for walks.

We don’t like that very much. Exercising authority is scary. For one thing, we’ll get opposition from people who don’t know or like God. That’s what Moses and Aaron expected from Pharaoh and the Egyptian government, and that’s exactly what they experienced. But then, God had given them His authority for the express purpose of dealing with that opposition and overcoming it so that Pharaoh and the whole world would know who the real God is.

What’s even scarier, though, is the opposition we face from people who should know better, or at least who claim to know God already. Moses and Aaron experienced that also, right after Pharaoh rejected them and increased his oppression of the people. Moses tried to reassure the people, telling them to trust God even though their circumstances severely tested their faith:

Moses spoke this way to *Bnei-Yisrael*, but they did not listen to him because of their broken spirit and cruel bondage.

Exodus 6:9 TLV

God’s people, sadly, tend to question and even reject the new things God is doing, even if they have been praying expectantly for Him to move. Our expectations often differ from His ways of intervening, even to the point that we can’t recognize His handiwork – or the ones He sends to accomplish His handiwork. Yeshua spoke directly about that when He rebuked those who rejected Him, and wept over Jerusalem, the Holy City that rejected God’s messengers. It’s written as well in the careers of Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and other saints commissioned and charged by the Creator to carry out

* R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1980), 756.

works intended to break through the existing circumstances and bring His people closer to His heart. And it's written in the stories from Yeshua's day to ours of saints who walked out a holy calling only to be opposed and even killed by the spiritual and political authorities of their day.

But there's another level of opposition God's charge to His people must overcome: the opposition within ourselves. We wonder how we could be chosen by God to do His work, thinking ourselves unworthy, or, more likely, not wanting to have our own status quo disrupted and our comfort zones demolished by the call of a persistent Creator. We see that in Moses' story as well, even after he had met with his Maker at the Burning Bush and returned to Egypt. He already carried God's charge, but had to be reminded of it after he encountered these three levels of opposition. We see that when we read these verses in context:

Moses spoke this way to *Bnei-Yisrael*, but they did not listen to him because of their broken spirit and cruel bondage. So *ADONAI* told Moses, "Go, speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that will he let *Bnei-Yisrael* go out of his land."

But Moses said to *ADONAI*, "*Bnei-Yisrael* have not listened to me. So how would Pharaoh listen to me—I, who have uncircumcised lips?"

Then *ADONAI* spoke to Moses and to Aaron and gave to them a charge for *Bnei-Yisrael* and Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring *Bnei-Yisrael* out of the land of Egypt.

Exodus 6:9-13 TLV

When God puts us in charge, He doesn't really say, "Don't break anything." Quite the opposite. He wants this oppressive world system of bondage to sin and death broken once and for all, beginning with the chains around our own hearts. He has made the way. It's up to us either to follow Him along that difficult path, or sit sadly quiet in our comfortable spot and do nothing until He returns.