

Moses

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Hebrews 11:23-29

Moses was one of the greatest characters in the Old Testament. Deut. 34:10, *“And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,”*

He is a huge figure among all mankind of all history.

His name appears in the Bible over seven hundred and fifty times in over thirty Bible books.

Moses was an author (He wrote the first five books of the Bible), a lawgiver, the builder of the tabernacle, a prophet, intercessor, and type of Christ.

Moses was the “friend of God.” Exo. 33:11, *“And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend ...”*

He was elected to faith’s hall of fame. Heb. 11:23-29, *“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.”*

Moses’ first forty years

Moses was born in a time of great distress. It was during a time that the Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph. Exo. 1:8, *“Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.”*

Israel had been in Egypt four hundred years. Their number had grown from seventy to perhaps as many as two million. They were exceedingly mighty in the land. Exo. 1:7, *“And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.”*

The Egyptians feared that if they went to war, Israel would take sides with their enemies. Exo. 1:10, *“Come on, let us deal wisely*

with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.”

So the Pharaoh sent taskmasters to increase Israel’s burdens. Yet, the more burdens Israel received, the more Israel multiplied! Exo. 1:11, *“Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.”*

The Pharaoh then ordered the midwives to kill all the male Hebrew children. They would not do so for their fear of God. Exo. 1:15-21, *“And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.”*

Then the Pharaoh ordered that all male Hebrew babies be cast into the river. Exo. 1:22, *“And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.”*

Moses’ parents.

They were Amram and Jochebed. They were both of the tribe of Levi. Exo. 2:1, *“And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.”*

When Moses was born he was a goodly child. Acts 7:20, *“In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father’s house three months.”*

One of the greatest verses in the Bible is Heb. 11:23, *“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment.”*

What great faith and courage manifested by Moses’ parents! No wonder he turned out like he did.

But the time came when Moses could be hid no more. So an ark of bulrushes was made. Perhaps the parents of Moses believed that their boy would be safe in the river. He would never be found there. They placed that waterproof ark in the Nile River. Somehow they believed that the Pharaoh's daughter might find him and because of his beauty, spare him. This happened in the province of God. Miriam, his sister, was allowed to choose a Hebrew nurse, and selected Moses' own mother to care for him.

Exo. 2:7-10, *"Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."*

The Pharaoh's daughter named him Moses which means "to draw out of the water." Thus, Moses' own mother was allowed to mold him during those all-important formative years. Amram and Jochebed show us that culture does not need to destroy the souls of the young. Though raised in a pagan world, Moses, as we shall see, held tenaciously to his belief in the one true and living God.

Deut. 6:4-9, *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."*

Moses' second forty years

As the years passed, Moses grew up. Acts 7:20-22, *"In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."*

We have already commented on the appearance of Moses. No doubt he grew up to be a very handsome man. He must have been

blessed with many physical assets. These are helpful, but not always essential for success. God does not look on the outer man, but on the heart. 1 Sam. 16:7, *“But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”*

Moses was a giant intellect. After all, he was the Pharaoh’s daughter’s son. He was reared in the king’s palace. He had the best education in the world. He was taught such things as astrology, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and the sacred sciences. No doubt, he was trained in combat and war strategies.

Moses was also a leader. Josephus said that when Egypt was attacked by Ethiopia, Moses was made a general and led Egypt to victory.

The time came when Moses learned that there was more to life than what he had.

Perhaps, Moses is a good example of Solomon’s statement that, if you train up a child in the way that he shall go, he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6). Here also is a good illustration of the fact that a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses (Luke 12:15).

No verses in the entire Bible depict more graphically the change that came over Moses than Hebrews 11:24-26, *“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”*

Surely, this was an agonizing decision for Moses. He certainly loved the Pharaoh’s daughter. She had done much for him. Any way you look at it, his decision was a great personal sacrifice. He had prominence, honor, fame, and fortune. Yet, he gave it all up for a life of suffering, ill treatment, and reproach.

How could Moses make such a decision?

Moses knew that the pleasures of sin last only for a season. In fact, I suspect that Moses realized that the world was passing away, and life at its longest is brief indeed.

- Psalms 90:10, *“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”*

- James 4:14, “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

Moses also knew that his honor, glory, fame, power, and riches would fade away into insignificance in death and in eternity. Death is the great equalizer.

Moses believed that suffering ill treatment or reproach like that which Jesus was to bear would enable him to lay up treasures in Heaven.

Matt. 6:19-21, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Moses kept his eternal reward ever before him. He looked beyond this life to the next. He considered eternal life more important than his earthly life. God is a rewarding God. Heb. 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Our eternal reward ought to motivate us to seek the things that are above and not the things that are on the earth. Col. 3:1-2, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Finally, Moses kept his eye on the invisible God. This enabled him to endure. Christians are told to “... run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:1-2).

If we will keep our eye on God through faith, we will be able to overcome any obstacles along life’s uneven pathway.

The time came in Moses’ life when he had to choose between the physical and the spiritual. We too must make a choice.

Jesus said in Matt. 6:24, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

- Matt. 6:33, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

- Matt. 16:24, *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”*

Moses had times in his life when he did everything right. He also had times in his life when he made great mistakes. Did you ever make such a mistake that the whole world seemed as if it were against you? Moses did. Yet, God used Moses in spite of his mistakes. God did not turn against him.

In Exo. 2:11-12 Moses saw a Hebrew being beaten by his Egyptian taskmaster. Moses killed the Egyptian. He was probably motivated by both anger and compassion.

Imagine Moses’ shock when his brethren turned against him for doing what he thought was an act that would bring about their deliverance! Acts 7:25, *“For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.”*

They did not understand, and wanted to know who made Moses a judge over them. Not only was Moses rejected by his own people, he was rejected by the Egyptians. In fact, the Pharaoh sought to kill him. Exo. 2:15, *“Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.”*

Moses was probably motivated more by emotion than by rationality. His heart was ahead of his head. He was acting as one who relied on his own strength. He was later to learn that victory would be won with might far beyond any that he had ever known. At age 40 he killed an Egyptian; at 80 he killed thousands with the help of almighty God.

As a result of this rejection, Moses fled to the land of Midian. There he married Jethro’s daughter, Zipporah. They had two sons, Gershom and Eliezer. He remained in the land of Midian for 40 years.

These were not wasted years. He was becoming seasoned for the leadership role that would one day be his. He was subjected to the severe discipline of the desert, learning first-hand the land that he was to be so much a part of in the future.

The third forty years

Exo. 3:1-10, *“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the*

LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy 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. And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”

Acts 7:30-36, “And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.”

From these verses we learn that the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. God spoke to him out of the bush. He told Moses that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God declared that His people were afflicted, and that He would deliver them. Moses was told that he was to stand before the Pharaoh for the purpose of delivering Israel out of Egypt.

Then Moses began to offer excuses! Who am I? Exo. 3:11, “*And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?*” God said, “*I am with thee.*”

What shall I say? Exo. 3:13-14, “*And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*”

What if they will not believe or listen? God said that He would give them three signs. They were the rod that would turn into a serpent, then there was the leprous hand, and the water that would be turned into blood (Exo. 4:1-9).

I am not eloquent. God said that he would teach Moses what to say. Aaron was, of course, eventually made Moses’ spokesman (Exo. 4:10-14).

Moses made God angry with his excuses. Exo. 4:13-14, “*And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well ...*”

God then began to put Moses to the test for the purpose of helping him to overcome his feelings of inferiority.

- Exo. 4:27-31, “*And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.*”
- Exo. 6:1-12, “*Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have also*

established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD. And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. 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?"

The primary methods were the ten plagues that God sent upon Egypt. Though Aaron seemed to have been the leader and spokesman through the first three plagues, Moses began to assert his leadership with the fourth plague.

After the Israelites were finally allowed to leave, Pharaoh sent the Egyptian army after them. When the Israelites saw them coming, Moses said, "*Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.*" He lifted up his hand and stretched out his rod, and the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry land. The army of the Pharaoh was drowned in the sea as the walls of water collapsed.

Many things happened in the forty years of wandering in the desert; too many to mention in this lesson. But the Israelites murmured and complained constantly.

Eventually, of all those who were 20 years or older would perish in the wilderness (Num. 32:11-12); only Joshua and Caleb would be able to enter into the promised land (Num. 14:22-30).

Moses himself was not allowed to enter into the promised land.

When they were in Kadesh-Barnea they were without water. God told Moses to take his rod, gather the assembly, and speak to the rock, and water would come forth (Num. 20:1-11).

Moses, in a fit of anger with the children of Israel, said, “*Must we fetch you water out of this rock? Then Moses smote the rock twice with his rod.*” (Num. 20:10).

God told Moses and Aaron because of this they would not be allowed to enter Canaan. God could not overlook what was done.

Moses begged God to let him cross over to the land. God said, “No,” but He allowed him to look over and see it.

Moses died at the age of 120.

Israel wept and mourned over Moses for 30 days (Deut. 34:8).

Deut. 34:10, “*And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,*”

