

The life of Moses

Moses – His exile and Call

Exodus 2:23-25

Chapter 3

Chapter 3

MOSES – HIS EXILE AND CALL

“And it came to pass in process of time that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.”
(Exodus 2:23 – 25)

Moses was a man who was greatly used by God. He was used to lead the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. Through him God gave the Law to Israel. In him we find many types of the Lord Jesus Christ. God specifically put Moses in the house of Pharaoh to prepare him for the leadership role that he was to assume. In Acts 7:22 – 23 we read; “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.” At the end of that first forty years Moses was ready to be a leader. He was educated “in all the wisdom of the Egyptians”. He had achieved fame in Egypt as a war hero. He had certainly become a capable leader and thought that he was ready to lead the Israelites out of bondage. He was also very burdened for his people. Scriptures teach that, “It came into his heart to visit his brethren the

children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed.” Moses saw the need of his people and wanted to do something about it. Moses believed that he was the one chosen to lead his people out of Egypt. He wanted to be the deliverer of his people. Yet, as we read the accounts in Scripture we must understand that when Moses was forty years old, he had received the training that he needed but he, himself, was not ready to lead the people of God. God had many more things for him to learn before he could do what God had chosen him to do. God was going to reveal Himself to the world through Moses and the Children of Israel. At this point neither Moses nor the people remembered clearly who the God of Abraham was. God was about to reveal Himself to Moses, Israel, Pharaoh, the people of Egypt and the rest of the world.

Before God could use Moses as he wanted to, Moses first needed to be broken. Moses was ready to run ahead of God. God, however, had to first prepare the heart of his leader before he could lead. Had Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt when he was forty years old, all the world would have known was Moses and his greatness. God wanted the world to know of the greatness of God. He wanted the world to see the compassion He had for his people. He wanted all to know that He is a God who keeps His promises. He wanted the world to know of His judgment, justice and of His love. As believers in our New Testament day, we must realize that God can accomplish a great deal more through us if we do not worry about who gets

the credit but concern ourselves with giving God glory and making Him known. Though Moses was capable, he needed to understand that the job God had for him would be accomplished by God and not by his abilities. God would use Moses' meekness to accomplish this great work of deliverance." By using broken servants God reveals His great strength and power. In II Corinthians 12:9 – 10 we read of Paul's prayer to be delivered from the thorn in his flesh. We do not know just what that thorn was but it greatly hindered Paul and was a great source of concern for him. God refused to remove that thorn from him. His answer to Paul was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul's testimony then is, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." Paul tells Timothy that he was not to choose a novice to be the leader of the church. (I Timothy 3:6) He was to choose only those who had demonstrated that they understood the power of God and the glory of God. This is a process that takes time and is a product of our sanctification. As we walk with God and he grows our faith, we learn how to truly honor Him. He then can use us to accomplish greater things for His glory. He wants us to submit ourselves to Him as soon as we are saved and then He gives us tasks that are designed to mature our faith and perfect our service to Him.

As we study the passages in Exodus we become aware that not only was Moses not ready to lead, but the people of Israel were not ready to be led. I find it interesting that in many places the Scriptures tell us that the people cried by reason of their infirmity and their cry came up to God. I am hard pressed, however, to find a place where it says that they prayed to the God of their fathers to deliver them. They were complaining, and with good reason, but they were not praying. I do not believe that they fully understood who God was any more. All they knew of God were the stories that had been handed down to them for the past 400 years. There were stories of God's working with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There may have been those like the mid-wives who feared God and refused to abort the Hebrew babies. However, I believe their knowledge of God was lacking. As a practical fact most of the people of Israel had lost touch with the God of their fathers. Yet, the God of Heaven had not forgotten them. Psalm 139:2 – 6 is a precious reminder when it says, "Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

If we look at our text carefully we will see that God heard His people groaning. He looked upon His people and He had compassion, or respect

for them. He was noticing and remembering His people because of His promises to them. The Bible does not tell us that they prayed but it says often that He remembered. I believe that this is a reference to Genesis fifteen where God told Abraham that his descendants would be captive in a strange land for 400 years. Verse fourteen tells us, “And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance.” God heard His people’s cry because of His promise to them. God always keeps His word. It was not the cruelty of the oppressor that moved God’s heart; though I am sure He hurt for His people. It was not their worth as a people that moved God, though they were of inestimable value to God. God moved because of His own integrity. He keeps His word. We can count on God to do what He says He will do.

God knew that Moses was not ready to lead, and He knew that the people were not ready to be led from bondage. First, Moses needed to be led into the land of Midian. He had learned capability but now he needed to learn patience. To give him that patience God placed him in the household of a man named Jethro. When Moses killed the Egyptian who was abusing the Israelite he was committing an act of treason against the Pharaoh. “He supposed that his brethren would have understood.” Yet, they also were suspicious of his motives. He ran into the desert and joined a band of nomads that had descended from Abraham through Abraham’s wife, Keteura. God used this situation to teach Moses many lessons. He taught him patience and humility,

but most of all God taught Moses about Himself. Moses fathered two children while there. Their names tell us of His growth in faith. The first born was named Gershom which means, “a stranger here”. The name of the second was Eliezer which means “God is my help.” (Exodus 18:4; I Chro. 23:15) Moses now can acknowledge that he is not complete and sufficient in himself. He needed the help of God.

It was in this situation that God intervenes to reveal himself to Moses on a very personal level. In Exodus chapter three Moses stops to see the burning bush. When God speaks to him from out of the bush He tells him that He is the God of Abraham, therefore the God of promise. He is the God of Isaac, and therefore the God of life. He was the God of Jacob and therefore the God of provision and deliverance. This was the first direct communication from God that we have record of in over 400 years. When Moses sees the glory of God he removes his shoes and asks the question, “Who am I?” How Moses changed in forty years in the desert! He was the prince of Egypt, the next in line for the throne. Now he is a humble shepherd. Genesis 46:31 tells us that to the Egyptians shepherders were abominations. Now Moses is in a place where God can begin to use him.

God is never in a hurry yet, he is always on time. God has the most wonderful way of working both ends from the middle. He was preparing Moses for the job He had for him while He was preparing His people for their coming deliverance and their birth as a nation that God would call His own. At

the same time he was preparing Pharaoh and the people of Egypt to understand just who the true God of heaven was. God's maturing of Moses in Midian was a difficult time for Moses in many ways. Yet, if it were not for that time of maturing, Moses could have never have accomplished the task that God had for him. As a shepherd Moses had learned patience. He had learned the value of sticking with the flock. He learned the value of each individual sheep. He learned to provide food and protection for a flock that was prone to wander away from the safety of the flock. He learned that to provide for so many he needed to depend upon God and not on his own abilities. He is now in the place of God's leading where God can reveal himself to Moses and make him His ambassador to His people.

As we consider Moses the shepherd, it is good to consider that Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd. Moses cared for the sheep and later led the flock of God. Jesus loves and looks after His sheep today. Are you of His flock? Have you received Him as your Savior from the penalty of sin? I trust that if not, you will bow your head and call out to Him in prayer and faith and confess to Him that you are a sinner and ask Him to make you His child. Perhaps you are already a believer in the Lord Jesus, but have not been willing to submit to the molding hand of God in your life. He is trying to make you into a vessel that He can use, but you have resisted His efforts. Today, realize that it is your good and His glory that He wants to accomplish through you. Submission to the will of the Father is the path of true joy and happiness. As

we submit ourselves to Him, He accomplishes His will in us and through us. It may not be as dramatic as it was in the life of Moses but there is no limit to what God can do with the heart that is completely, unreservedly yielded to Him. Give Him complete control over your heart and life today.

To aid our learning:

1. Why was Moses not read to lead the Israelites out of Egypt when he was 40 years old?
2. What was God's overall purpose in the Exodus?
3. What character of God do you hope people will see in you?
4. How has God shown you lately that he really cares about you?
5. God keeps His word. What are you worrying about now?
6. How do Moses' children's names reflect his growth in faith?

7. How were Moses' flocks sheep in Midian similar for the flocks of Israelites?

8. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice." How do you know that He is your shepherd?

9. What job is God preparing you to do?