

Thanks to people of faith like Shiphrah and Puah, the midwives who defied the Pharaoh, and parents like Amram and Jochabed who hid their baby in a basket among the reeds in the Nile, Moses is now a 40-year-old prince of Egypt. (Acts 7:22-23) Of course, the people played a small but important role. It was God that gave them the courage and directed their steps. It was God that touched the princess' heart to keep the child. It is God that is fulfilling His word in bringing a savior! (Genesis 15:13-14)

**Commented [notes1]:** Acts 7:22-23 (ESV)  
22 And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.  
23 "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel.

This is one of those stories in Scripture that point to the glaring lesson of man's ways versus God's. Moses was trained in all the ways of the Egyptians. *Moses was educated in the great Temple of the Sun which was the outstanding university of the day. We underrate what the Egyptians knew and accomplished. Their knowledge of astronomy was phenomenal. They knew the exact distance to the sun. They worked on the theory that the earth was round and not flat. They knew a great deal about chemistry which is evidenced by the way they were able to embalm the dead. We have no process to equal it today.* (— J. Vernon McGee's Thru The Bible) He was probably even trained in warfare and hand-to-hand combat. What would you do if you were in Moses' place?

**Commented [notes2]:** Genesis 15:13-14 (ESV)  
13 Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.  
14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

Since the discovery of the King Tutankhamen's tomb and the fabulous wealth within, we have a little idea of the opulence and luxury of the ruling class in Egypt. Moses had it made. As far as this world goes, he had it all. And if he could just lay low and wait for his turn, he could rule it all. What a perfect time that would be to change the conditions for his people! God seems to have answered the prayers of the suffering Israelites and will soon put Moses on the throne, just as he had elevated Joseph. Sounds great, doesn't it?

**Commented [notes3]:** Discovered by Howard Carter in November of 1922.

There is a problem with this scenario. God wants to deliver more than the Israelites. God's vision is greater than our vision. He wants to declare to the Egyptians, slaves in Egypt, and even to the Israelites that have begun to adopt Egyptian gods, that He alone is God! (Jude 1:25) He wants to show us His glory, His heart. He wants to paint for us a picture of His power and might, and that won't happen if Moses just tries to influence Egypt to be kinder, gentler, nation.

**Commented [notes4]:** Jude 1:25 (NIV)  
25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

<sup>11</sup> *One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people.* There are several important words in the text that give us some insight to what was going on in Moses. "he went out" is the Hebrew word *yatza*. The same word is used later to describe the Exodus. Remember, Moses is writing this, so he may be giving us a clue to what was going on inside his heart. He had to go out of Egypt before he could lead others out. It is the same challenge that his name represents, "to draw out of". The allure of Egypt dazzles everyone, that is, until we start to see how shallow and

mirage like it really is. By going out, *He gave up position, pleasure, and prosperity, and by doing so he rejected three of the world's biggest temptations: narcissism, hedonism, and materialism.* (Preaching the Word - Exodus: Saved for God's Glory) (Hebrews 11:24-25) Moses went out - to where his own people were – and watched...

The word "watched" *yara* is also significant. It implies to see with emotion. It was used of Hagar when she could not watch her son die. (Genesis 21:16) Moses has broken out of his training of seeing the slaves as mere tools. They are his family. His heart went out to them. He knew that he could have easily been there among them in hard labor, but God had another plan. What was it? Surely God had set him in that position so that he could do something. This is our first reaction when we see injustice. What can I do? How can I change this?

Now Moses is in a dilemma. Can he wait until he takes the throne? People are suffering every day. Suddenly he heard someone cry out in pain. He went to the sound and saw a taskmaster mercilessly beating a Hebrew slave. The word for beating is the same word for killing in verse 12. We don't know if the taskmaster was beating the Hebrew to death or just punishing him, but Moses was suddenly faced with the need to act. (Psalm 82:3-4)

<sup>12</sup> *He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.* The taskmaster died in the struggle. This raises a lot of questions. Was Moses dressed like the prince he was or like a Hebrew? If he was dressed like a prince he could have ordered the man to stop. Was he looking for help or was he premeditating murder? Or did Moses lose his cool and in disgust for the cruelty before him intend to take the life of the taskmaster? Or was it an accident of the fight that ensued. We don't know. We just know Moses took the life of the taskmaster. (Genesis 9:6)

Could Moses have gotten out of any punishment for this? Perhaps, but he must have been concerned that the current Pharaoh would see it as the beginning of rebellion. He wouldn't have hidden the body if he thought he could justify it and persuade Pharaoh he was loyal to Egypt. Moses probably thought he could get away with it. He was hoping that the Hebrews would now know that the baby taken so long ago had grown up and was sympathizing with their plight. (Acts 7:25)

The very next day, Moses went out again to watch his people. He saw a Hebrew abusing another Hebrew. The problem isn't just enslavement to the Egyptians. The problem is slavery to sin! Even believers will wrong other believers. Moses asked *the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?"*<sup>14</sup> *He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known."*

**Commented [notes5]:** Hebrews 11:24-25 (NIV)  
24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.  
25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.

**Commented [notes6]:** Genesis 21:16 (NIV)  
16 Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob.

**Commented [notes7]:** Psalms 82:3-4 (NIV)  
3 Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.  
4 Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

**Commented [notes8]:** Genesis 9:6 (NIV)  
6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

**Commented [notes9]:** Acts 7:25 (NIV)  
25 Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.

Moses probably hoped that the man he rescued the day before would either stay quiet about the event, or rally people to Moses as the leader of their rebellion. Word of the murder somehow spread, and instead, the attitude of the Hebrews seemed to be one of bewildered doubt. The man in the wrong actually did have a point. Moses wasn't assigned to be a judge or overseer by Egypt or the Hebrews. Under what authority was he operating? God hadn't sent him to do this either. If that was the response of the Hebrews, even just some of them, the Pharaoh would surely hear about it.

Now what? There was no longer a chance to stand in between two worlds. His going out, and the rash action that followed, meant he would have to leave both worlds, Hebrew and Egyptian. He tried it his way and failed. He had to flee.

What was God up to? Why didn't He intervene? Have you ever been there? You thought you knew what God was up to, and you stepped out in what you thought was faith. Something went wrong, and before you know it, you have a huge mess on your hands and you're left wondering why God didn't step in and change it all. That's when we usually see that we were operating on our own good intentioned ideas and not the leading of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 17:24-27)

At 40 years of age, Moses left Egypt and traveled to Midian. It was the ancient land of Shasu, the grazing land of nomadic shepherds. He's a broken man. All his relationships are now in the past. His dreams of helping his people must die. His certainty of being raised as a prince to ease the burden of his people, an idea he must let go. He had 40 years of the world's education. Now he'll have 40 years of God's. He'll be humbled in the desert. Then he'll be ready to hear from God.

<sup>24</sup> *By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup> He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.* Hebrews 11:24-26 (ESV) The Hebrews passage seems to indicate that Moses had made up his mind by the time he went out to watch his people. He had seen all that Egypt offered and chose to suffer with the people of God. He knew the pleasures he could experience in the royal court came at the suffering of his own people, but more importantly, he recognized that those pleasures wouldn't last. (1John 2:17) I hope all of us recognize that truth!

I struggled with understanding how Moses could consider the reproach of Christ until I read this commentary on the subject. *According to Brevard Childs, this "phrase indicates an actual participation by Moses in Christ's shame in the same way as the saints who follow Christ later also share." In other words, as we suffer for Christ we are also suffering with Christ, enjoying what the Apostle Paul termed "the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings" (Phil. 3:10). Such suffering is the inevitable result of being identified with Christ and with his people. Where is*

**Commented [notes10]:** Matthew 17:24-27 (NIV)  
24 After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?"  
25 "Yes, he does," he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes--from their own sons or from others?"  
26 "From others," Peter answered. "Then the sons are exempt," Jesus said to him.  
27 "But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

**Commented [notes11]:** 1 John 2:17 (NIV)  
17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

our ultimate allegiance? What is our primary identification? If we call ourselves Christians, we must forsake the world to follow Christ, becoming spiritually joined to his people, just as Moses was. (Preaching the Word – Exodus) All believers by faith are a part of the body of Christ. To suffer with them for being unlike the world, whether they lived before the cross, or after, is to suffer the reproach of Christ. How should this connect us with ministry to the persecuted church?

Moses may have passed through the country that is today Sudan. People are still suffering reproach for the sake of Christ in that very same area of the world. Have we chosen to suffer with them or enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season? Our pleasure isn't at their expense as Moses' pleasure would have been, but the Scriptures do command us to love our brothers and to remember those who are mistreated since we are also in the body. (Hebrews 13:3)

The story is also told in even more detail by Stephen in the book of Acts. <sup>23</sup> "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. <sup>24</sup> And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. <sup>25</sup> He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. <sup>26</sup> And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?' <sup>27</sup> But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?' <sup>28</sup> Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' <sup>29</sup> At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. Acts 7:23-29 (ESV)

We have seen that Moses was a foreshadow of Jesus. What can we see of Jesus in our text for today? First, remember that Jesus also learned obedience through the things He suffered. (Hebrews 5:8) Jesus was never guilty of rash disobedience like Moses, but as Moses learned from that mistake to look to God and not do things his own way, so also Jesus realized the same truth without sinning.

Moses identified himself with the people of God for the purpose of saving them from their enslavement. Jesus became one of us, fully identifying with us in order to set us free from enslavement to sin. (Romans 8:2-3) Moses was not ashamed to call the Hebrews his brothers. Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers. (Hebrews 2:11) Think of that. Even after the Hebrews spilled the beans about what Moses had tried to do for them, he still considered himself of their family. We misrepresent Jesus time and time again and He still calls us family. What grace!

It was a big step down from the palace to the slave pits, but Moses was willing to humble himself and give up the position he held. Jesus took a much bigger

**Commented [notes12]:** Hebrews 13:3 (NIV)  
3 Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

**Commented [notes13]:** Hebrews 5:8 (NIV)  
8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered

**Commented [notes14]:** Romans 8:2-3 (NIV)  
2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.  
3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,

**Commented [notes15]:** Hebrews 2:11 (NIV)  
11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.

step down from the halls of heaven to the world of fallen man to walk among the slaves of sin. (Philippians 2:6-8)

I think Moses knew in his heart that the Egyptian world would not change. Even if he became Pharaoh, the ethnic hatred, the greed that enslaves others, the abuse of man for personal advancement is a deeper problem than mere education or even indoctrination. He really had no choice. If he was going to identify with the people of God, he had to leave the evil influences and mindset of Egypt. He couldn't change Egypt, so he had to leave it behind and draw us out with him. (James 4:4) So also, Jesus isn't changing the kingdoms of men, but drawing us out to be citizens of heaven.

As admirable as Moses goals were, as big a heart that he had for his people, he was guilty of something we all have to deal with, doing it my way. This was Moses declaring himself Savior and going about delivering them in his own wisdom (aided by the most enlightened education of the day), to bring justice to the world. Man's way often sounds great. That is why we so often try it. But if salvation is going to come to these broken, arguing, demoralized Hebrews, it is going to come from God by grace. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

How about your friend or neighbor? Can you save them? Well, I hope no one ends up dying in the process. The lesson here is that God has His way and His time. If you come up with a great scheme to lead them to Christ, you may do more damage than good. Pray! Remember how God won your heart. More than likely it wasn't some plan someone developed in a spiritual war room. (John 15:5) Instead, it was God working through this thing and that person and He brought it all together at the perfect time and moved on your heart. In other words, it was God and his grace. Perhaps God used a Moses, but it wasn't that person's plan; it was God's plan.

Maybe at sometime you've come to this place that Moses is at in the story. You've failed. You did what you thought was right and it ended up really ugly. OK, what did you learn? Next time act at His leading. Are there some bodies buried in the sand that testify to your guilt and fear? It is just evidence that it was you and not God. God does have a great plan to deal with that neighbor or loved one. Pray. Watch. Wait, and act at the leading of the Holy Spirit. If you've given up and had to let go of your dreams, good! God has a better one for you, one that you would never have dreamed up on your own. Get ready. Listen. Watch for those burning bushes. Listen to the Word and to that still, small voice. Wait for the Lord! Be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. (Psalm 27:14)

**Commented [notes16]:** Philippians 2:6-8 (NIV)  
6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.  
8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

**Commented [notes17]:** James 4:4 (NIV)  
4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

**Commented [notes18]:** Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)  
8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--  
9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

**Commented [notes19]:** John 15:5 (NIV)  
5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

**Commented [notes20]:** Psalms 27:14 (NIV)  
14 Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.