

## Moses Makes a Choice

**Text:** Exodus 2:11-15; Acts 7:20-29; Heb. 11:24-27

### Introduction:

1. In our last message we saw Moses miraculously protected by God and adopted into Pharaoh's family. Forty years transpire from verse 10-11. During that time Moses was trained "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and in deeds." (Acts 7:20)
2. Reminder: Moses' life divides into **three 40-year** periods:
  - Moses spent 40 years as a Student (Acts 7:22)
  - Moses spent 40 years as a Shepherd (Ex. 3:1; 7:7)
  - Moses spent 40 years as a Servant
  - "It has been said that Moses spent 40 years in the court of Pharaoh learning to be something. Then he spent 40 years in the desert of Midian learning to be nothing. Then he spent 40 years on the road to Canaan proving God to be everything (See Acts 7:23, 30 & 36)."<sup>1</sup>
3. Now as a fully grown adult, Moses is at a crossroads. Will he continue in the palace of Pharaoh or take the side of God's despised, enslaved people. This was undoubtedly the most consequential choice of his life. His example shines as a beacon to us in our day when we are faced with the same kind of choice as God's people.
4. Hebrews 11:24-27 reveals that faith was behind what took place in this account. Let's take a look at Moses faith as revealed in this section and in the light of the Holy Spirit's inspired commentary in Acts and Hebrews.

### I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOSES' FAITH (VS. 10-11)

Moses actions in this passage, though imperfect, reveal a faith that had grown.

#### A. The Seed of Moses Faith (Vs. 10; Heb. 11:23)

1. Despite the fact Moses was trained in Egyptian wisdom, we get a strong indication that Jochebed used the limited time she had with Moses well to instill truth into him. Even after all that secular training, Moses still knew the truth in several key areas:
  - a. Moses knew he was a Hebrew, one of God's chosen people (Acts 7:23).
  - b. Moses believed God would use him to deliver his people (Acts 7:25).
  - c. Moses, at the age of 40, rejected the wealth and fame of Egypt and chose a life of faith and separation with God's people (Heb. 11:24-27).
2. Sowing the seed of salvation truth into the hearts of our children while they are young is so important! 2 Tim. 3:15 "And that **from a child** thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

#### B. The Sprouting of Moses Faith (Vs. 11)

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<sup>1</sup> D Lyle, *A Journey through the Bible: Genesis to Esther*, p.50.

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1. The seed sown by Moses' parents now begins to bear fruit. We see this demonstrated in his heart of compassion towards his brethren in slavery.
2. Moses leaves the comfort of the palace to look upon the burdens of his people. Acts 7:23 reveals, "And when he was a full forty years old, **it came into his heart** to visit his brethren the children of Israel." The phrase "looked on their burdens" has the sense "to see with emotion". It is the kind of looking that demands intense personal involvement with what one sees (See Gen. 21:16).  
(Ryken)

### II. **THE DECISION OF MOSES' FAITH (VS. 11; HEB. 11:24-26)**

Hebrews reveals that Moses' actions in visiting his brethren as recorded in Exodus were the product of his faith in God and represented a definite choice. Moses' faith helped him to make the right choice. Observe two aspects to Moses' decision of faith:

#### **A. Faith's Refusal (Vs. 24-25)**

##### **1. When He Refused – "when he was come to years" (Vs. 24a)**

- a. Moses is now a young adult. Forty years old seems old to us in our day with our much shorter lifespan compared with the ancients but remember Moses lived for 120 years so in the context of his life, 40 was young. Moses made this critical decision when he was in the prime of his life.
- b. Moses had been taught the truth by his parents at a young age but now we see him as an adult making his own decision for God. This is so critical! Adult children who have been raised in Christian homes need to come to the place where they make their own, definite choice to follow the God of their parents for themselves.
- c. Early adult years represent a critical crossroads. The world with its glitter and glamour beckons on the one hand. The narrow path of faith and true blessing stands on the other. Which will you take?

##### **2. What He Refused (Vs. 24b-25)**

Moses refused:

- a. The World's Popularity – "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter".
  - i. To be a part of the Egyptian royal family was to have celebrity status. Egypt was the most powerful nation on earth. Moses had a reputation as a man "mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7:22). There is little doubt Moses was trained to be a general in Pharaoh's army. The Jewish historian Josephus claims Moses was instrumental in defeating the Ethiopians in battle. Moses' picture would have been regularly on the front page of the Nile news, the Delta daily and the Pyramid Post. You can see the front page. Muscley Mo in his golden chariot. Everyone wanted to follow him on Egyptbook! He had millions of followers on "Instaglyphs" and "Sphinxsocial". Everyone wanted to see his pins on "Pyramidterest".

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- ii. This meant going against his adopted mother. We can only assume there were bonds of natural affection between them. Her compassion towards him as a baby and willingness to defy her father's own edict gives us a sense that she was a kind woman.
  - iii. Tradition says that the Egyptian princess was unable to have children herself and that Moses was even in the line for the throne.
  - iv. The path of faith will sometimes cut across the bonds of natural affection. It will put you at odds with family members.
- b. The World's Pleasures – “the pleasures of sin” (Vs. 25)
- i. Moses chose God's people over perverse pleasures. The people you choose to associate with says a LOT about the kind of person you are. Birds of a feather flock together!
  - ii. Moses chose lasting blessings over temporary satisfaction. Notice that there is pleasure in sin “for a season”. The world only shows you sin's springtime, not the dark cold winter that comes afterwards. Proverbs 20:17 “Bread of deceit *is* sweet to a man; but **afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.**” Proverbs 23:31-32 “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. **At the last** it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.” James 1:15 “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth **death.**” The entertainment industry only shows you the pleasures of sin but does not show the consequences of sin.
  - iii. Choose eternal blessings, spiritual pleasures and all the true joys that come from the walk of faith. Psalm 16:11 “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* **pleasures** for evermore.” Psalm 84:11 “For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: **no good thing** will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.”
- c. The World's Prosperity – “the treasures in Egypt”
- i. The wealth of the Pharaoh's was staggering. Even today archaeologists continue to dig up evidences of the immense treasure the Egyptian royalty possessed.<sup>2</sup> Moses could have had everything money could buy. The treasures of Egypt were at his fingertips and yet by faith he being reproached for Christ as more valuable than anything Egypt could offer.

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<sup>2</sup> One thinks of the fabulous golden treasures that the English archaeologist Howard Carter found in the tomb of King Tutankhamen (King Tut) (Nov. 1922). These dazzling artifacts give some idea of what Moses left behind the day he left Pharaoh's palace to visit the Hebrews. The innermost coffin (the third of three) of Tutankhamun was solid gold weighing approx. 110 kilograms. [www.egypt-museum.com/innermost-coffin-of-tutankhamun](http://www.egypt-museum.com/innermost-coffin-of-tutankhamun)

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- ii. Sadly, many Christians today do not make the same wise decision Moses made. They sacrifice eternal things on the altar of the world's materialism. Instead of being consumed with eternal things, they are consumed with carnal, material things.
  - iii. Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye **first** the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." What comes **first** in your life?
  - iv. 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."
- d. By faith, Moses was enabled to overcome the lust of the flesh (Egypt's pleasures), the lust of the eyes (Egypt's treasures) and the pride of life (son of Pharaoh's daughter). Moses rejected three of the world's biggest temptations: narcissism, hedonism, and materialism.

### 3. Why He Refused – "By faith" (Vs. 24a)

- a. Moses' decision made no sense to the natural man. From the human standpoint, Moses had EVERYTHING and to turn his back on it appeared insane. But faith gave him spiritual eyesight to see things from a totally different perspective to the world.
- b. Moses was living with eternity in view. Are you? Try and imagine your first moments in heaven after death and the perspective you would have then on this evil world with its wrong priorities. We need to have that heavenly mindset now lest we waste our lives on that which will not last.

### B. Faith's Reward (Vs. 26)

- 1. Faith enabled Moses to sharply discern between what was temporal and what was eternal. His faith gave him focus on what was truly valuable. Think of what Moses would have lost if he had chosen Egypt with its pleasures and treasures over the path of faith and the will of God. He would have missed the Lord speaking to him "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Ex. 33:11). He would have missed seeing God use him mightily. He would have missed the giving of the law. He would have missed the manna in the wilderness. He would have missed the mighty acts of God for His people. He would have missed out on the high privilege and calling of being a man of God.
- 2. Moses was attracted to something far higher and more glorious than anything Egypt could offer. Something he saw with the eye of faith. Moses was more interested in eternal rewards than temporal pleasures.
- 3. The word 'respect' literally means "to look away from everything else so as to fix one's eyes on one thing." It is made up of 'apo' (from) and 'blepo' (to look), hence "to look away from". The word is in the imperfect tense, indicating continuous action in the past. So, this was not a once of act but a persistent mindset for Moses. "He was looking away from" the things of Egypt in order to stay focused

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- on eternal rewards. “The word was used of keeping one’s attention fixed upon something, as an artist fixes his attention on the object or model he is reproducing in painting or sculpture”. (Linguistic Key)
4. Because of his faith in God’s Word, Moses saw things that the world does not see, understood things that the world does not understand. “The result? Instead of occupying a line or two of hieroglyphics on some obscure tomb, he is memorialized in God’s eternal Book. Instead of being found in a museum as an Egyptian mummy, he is famous as a man of God.” (Believer’s Bible Commentary)
  5. May God give us such focus in our Christian race! Hebrews 12:2 “**Looking** unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith...”
  6. The phrase “recompense of the reward” comes from a compound Greek word made up of ‘misthos’ (reward) and ‘apodidomi’ (to give back). There are rewards for faith even in this life but the greatest rewards await us in glory. The rewards for living for Christ are literally out of this world.
  7. It is not wrong for part of our motivation for living for God to be eternal rewards! We should desire the reward of Christ’s approval, “well done, good and faithful servant”. We should desire the crowns that are available for faithful service.

### III. THE DEFICIENCIES IN MOSES’ FAITH (VS. 11B-14)

The Exodus account highlights that Moses faith had not yet grown to full maturity. At this stage in his life, Moses is both zealous and foolish. There was more work to do on Moses before he would be ready for his main life’s work. Moses was battling what we all battle with, the assertion of the self-life in his walk of faith. Moses exhibited:

#### A. Self-will in his Service (Vs. 11b-12)

1. Moses came out to see his enslaved brethren and saw an Egyptian beating one of his Hebrew brothers. Moses looked this way and that, slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The fact Moses had to look furtively this way and that reveals there was a problem. He was focused on what man’s perspective might be of his actions more than God’s. “Whenever we look around to shun a mortal’s frown or catch his smile, we may rest assured there is something wrong; we are off the proper ground of divine service.” (Mackintosh)
2. Moses’ motive was right, his method was wrong. A response to the injustice he saw was only appropriate but it needed to be a wise response. The punishment did not fit the crime.
3. As the son of Pharaoh’s daughter with the status of prince no doubt a verbal command would have been all that was required to stop the taskmaster beating the Hebrew slave. Instead, it appears Moses lost his temper, got in the flesh and took matters into his own hands.
4. The admonition from James is timely. James 1:19-20 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, **slow to wrath**: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

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### B. Self-importance in his Service (Vs. 13-14)

1. Moses comes back the next day and sees two Hebrews fighting. He rebukes them but they have a typical response to rebuke and lash out at Moses. “A man needs no great authority for the giving of a friendly reproof, it is an act of kindness; yet this man needs will interpret it an act of dominion, and represents his reprover as imperious and assuming.” (Henry)
2. Acts 7:25 “For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.” It was true that God was going to use Moses but he was too big in the picture. The word ‘supposed’ comes from the Greek word meaning “to think”. Moses’ mindset was that his brethren would recognize him as God’s appointed man for the hour.
3. Moses ran into several timeless principles that each of God’s servants must come to terms with – God’s work must be done in **God’s way**, in **God’s timing** and with **God’s enabling**.
4. We need to come to terms with the fact that often there is too much of self in our service for God to be of much spiritual use, especially when we are young and immature in the faith. That does not mean we should not attempt to serve God as young Christians. We just need to be prepared to cooperate with God as He works to refine and mature us in order that our usefulness for His glory might be increased.
5. C.H. Mackintosh wisely notes, “The servant of Christ has to learn many a lesson, to undergo many an exercise, to pass through many a conflict, in secret, ere he is really qualified to act in public. Nature does not like this. It would rather figure in public than to learn in private. It would rather be gazed upon and admired by the eye of man than be disciplined by the hand of God. But it will not do. We must take God’s way. Nature may rush into the scene of operation; but God does not want it there. It must be withered, crushed, set aside. The place of death is the place for nature.”

### IV. THE DEPARTURE OF MOSES’ FAITH (VS. 15; Heb. 11:27)

When Pharaoh heard that Moses had slain the Egyptian to protect a Hebrew slave, he sought to kill him. The primary issue was not that Moses had killed an Egyptian. The issue was that Moses had sided with a slave over a citizen of Egypt. This was an affront to the established order of Egyptian society and given Pharaoh’s policy of suppression towards the Israelites, it was seen as an act of treason. “Moses went against the education he would have received as a prince. One of the primary goals of Pharaoh’s educational system was to reinforce the pride of those in power. See Pg. 55 for example. Some ancient Egyptian texts describe slaves as the “living dead” or donkeys. All of their hard labour is contrasted with the pleasures of the ruling elite, who enjoy a life of ease.” (Ryken)

#### A. The Principles in Moses’ Departure – “By faith he forsook Egypt”

1. The principle of faith – “by faith”. It took faith for Moses to trust God and leave where he was. He could have made the excuse “well God put me here”. That would be a true statement on the one hand. God had providentially placed Moses in the Egyptian palace. But

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faith also recognizes that God can also move us on from where we are.

2. The principle of separation – “he forsook Egypt”.
  - a. We see the wisdom of God in removing him from Egypt. Victory would not come from the man of God working from within the system but from the place of separation outside the system. God separated Moses from Egypt, matured him, then brought him back to impact Egypt. **Separation from the world is necessary if we are going to have a true impact upon the world.**
  - b. “We have here the great cause of the weakness of faith in our days. There is no separation from the world. So many Christians seek to have as much of its pleasure and honour and riches as they possibly can, consistently with their profession of religion. In such an atmosphere faith is stifled. Many hardly believe, or never remember, that the world, with its arts and culture and prosperity, amid all its religious professions, is still the same world that rejected Christ.” (Andrew Murray)

### **B. The Perspective of Moses’ Departure – “he endured as seeing him who is invisible”**

1. Moses eyes of faith gave him a vision of the invisible God and gave him the strength to patiently endure.
2. “Faith looks at everything in the light of eternity, judging of it as one will do when the judgment day is past, and the glory begun; everything is seen in its true value, and sacrifice and suffering and loss and trial are welcomed as the training in which the glad decision, and the firm will, and the strong character, and the victory of faith are attained.” (Andrew Murray)

## **V. THE DEPICTION OF MOSES’ FAITH**

Moses is a clear type of Christ. We know this from Deuteronomy 18:15 “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;” We will note some of these as we study the life of Moses. Here’s a few we can see so far:

- A. Moses was born to humble parents under a foreign power. Christ was born to Mary who was under the foreign rule of Rome.
- B. Moses’ life was threatened by the king of Egypt’s murderous edict in his infancy. Christ’s life was threatened by king Herod’s murderous edict to kill all the baby boys 2 years and under in Bethlehem.
- C. Moses’ life was miraculously preserved in the Palace of Egypt. Christ’s life was spared from Herod’s murderous plan in Egypt.
- D. Moses left the glories of the Egyptian Palace and came in love to an enslaved people to set them free. Christ left the glories of Heaven to come to earth to people enslaved by sin and died on the cross to set them free.
- E. Moses was rejected by Israel at his first coming to them but was accepted of them when he came back the second time. In like manner,

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Israel rejected Christ as their Messiah at His first coming but will accept him at His second coming.

- F. Moses took a non-Jewish bride after he left Egypt. In like manner, the church is mainly made up of Gentiles.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Do your choices reflect the perspective of faith? Are you making your decisions in the light of eternity? Do you have an eternal perspective? Do you need to refuse some things by faith?
2. Are you cooperating with God as he works to remove self from your service? Are you too big in the picture for God to use in any significant way?
3. Are you pursuing the separated walk? In order to impact the world, we need to be separate from it.