

Moments for YOU

Volume 52, Number 1

Theme: Moses



KEEPING THE PASSOVER

“Through faith he kept the Passover” (Hebrews 11:28) marks a high point in the life of Moses. After his preservation as an infant, his privileged years in Pharaoh’s palace, and pastoral mid-life in the desert, Moses returned to Egypt with his message from God: “Let My people go” (Exodus 5:1). If you know the story, you’ll recall that Pharaoh refused, and then a series of ten plagues descended upon the Egyptians. It was the tenth plague—the death of the firstborn—that finally set the Israelites free.

To protect His people from this deadly plague, God instituted the Passover. As Moses told the people, “The LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians” (Exodus 12:23). To protect their households, the Israelites were to sacrifice a lamb and mark their houses with its blood: “When He seeth the blood ... the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.”

The Passover speaks to us of Jesus Christ, “The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). As we remember His death and resurrection this Easter, let us not miss the importance of His sacrifice and our need of taking shelter in His shed blood.

Like Moses, maybe your life has had some ups and downs. Our prayer is that you will come to know God by faith, as Moses did, and follow Him all the days of your life. The only way to start is by “Keeping the Passover”—trusting yourself completely to the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ.

—T. Don Johnson

THE FAITH OF MOSES’ PARENTS

Faith often begins in the parents. The Apostle Paul speaks to Timothy of “the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice” (2 Timothy 1:5).

Amram and Jochebed’s faith was shown in the fact that Moses was hidden by them for three months, “because they saw he was a proper child” (Hebrews 11:23); or, as Stephen says, “beautiful before God” (Acts 7:20, RSV). They believed he would be a fitting instrument for God to use, and so they hid him in spite of the commandment that every male baby should be cast into the river. And when his mother could no longer hide him, she took the king literally at his word. She put the child at the river’s brink, but in the basket she had prepared.

Let us not be afraid to have faith for our children, to lay hold upon God for them even before they are able to lay hold upon Him for themselves. It is true that children must trust in God for their own salvation. However, suppose that Moses’ parents had not believed for him. Suppose they had said, “If he were old enough, he might trust in God; but we must cast him into the river and let him die.” That would have been the end of Moses as far as human power was concerned. But what a place they put him in! He was taken from the river by Pharaoh’s daughter, adopted by her, and then put back under his mother’s care until he was of sufficient age to go permanently back to the king’s court.

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Long before every earthly advantage was given to Moses, God's tender care had given him all the benefit of a mother's love and training in the fear of God and His ways. How diligently that dear mother must have made use of her time! How she must have taught that young child that he was identified with those bondsmen who were the people of God! How she must have instilled into his mind the promises of God, that He would visit them and bring them up out of Egypt, and give them an inheritance! No doubt she made faithful and diligent use of her opportunities. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." In a much higher sense, what untold wages are given to a faithful mother, if she has spent time and strength and prayers in bringing up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!

As we look upon the children God has given us, let us say "Oh, let them be beautiful for God throughout eternity!" At first, let us throw every safeguard around them; make every effort to shield them from the evil of the world. As they grow up and we can no longer keep them under our eye constantly, we will have to launch them out on the river of life—sent off to school or to some employment. It is then that faith, by God's grace, does as Moses' parents did! They put the child of their care in the ark and said, "We will count upon God for him." So godly parents commit their beloved children to Christ as they send them off—not in a careless way, but counting upon that precious Saviour who has saved us, to keep our dear ones and to bring them unspotted out of all that into which they will be thrown.

—Adapted from *Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews* by Samuel Ridout

THE FAITH OF MOSES

Read Hebrews 11:24-26

WHAT MOSES REFUSES (VERSE 24)

Moses is an outstanding example of a believer who by faith overcomes all that this present world can offer in the way of attraction and glory. His parents overcame fear of the world's dangers and uncertainties, while their son overcame its allurements and temptations. This is an important lesson for us, because we may overcome the fear of the world and yet fall to its attractions.

It is well to recall what Scripture presents as to Moses' remarkable character, as well as the high position he occupied in the world. In his address before the Jewish council, Stephen gives us a brief but remarkable summary of the character and position of Moses (Acts 7:20-22). There we are told that he was "exceeding fair," and also that he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds." Here then was a man whose appearance was attractive, and whose mind was well stored with all the learning of the leading country of the world in that day. He could apply his wisdom with weighty words, and he could follow up his words with mighty deeds. By adoption, he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and thus in the direct line to the throne of the pharaohs. Moses, then, was fitted in every way to fill with distinction the highest position the world had to offer.

Under circumstances so favorable to advancement in this world, how does Moses act? First we read, "When he was come to years"—when the moment was favorable for him to take advantage of his great abilities and position—he turned his back on all this world's glory, and "refused

to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

WHAT MOSES CHOOSES (VERSE 25)

Secondly, we learn that what he chooses is as striking as what he refuses. In his day there were a large number of people who formed the lowest class in Egypt. They were unwanted foreigners, treated with the utmost rigor as slaves. Their lives were made bitter because of their hard bondage as they labored at brick making and worked in the fields under the scorching sun (Exodus 1:13,14). But, in spite of their low estate and hard bondage, these slaves were the people of God. With these people Moses chose to throw in his lot, preferring to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

In the presence of this remarkable "refusing" and "choosing" we may well ask what the spring of his actions was. In one word we are told the answer: it was *faith*. In faith he refused the world; in faith he chose affliction with the people of God. Moreover, faith allowed him to act in the face of *providence*, in spite of the dictates of *natural feelings*, and in a way that appeared to contradict *common sense*.

Could it not have been argued that it would be wrong for Moses to ignore the remarkable providence by which God had placed him in the very highest position before the king? Also, it might have been said that gratitude to Pharaoh's daughter demanded that he remain in the palace. Reason and common sense would suggest that his great abilities and his high position could be used to promote the interest of his poor brethren.

Faith, however, looks to God, knowing that while providence, right natural feelings, and common sense

may have their place, they cannot be a true guide or rule of conduct in the path of faith.

WHAT MOSES ESTEEMS (VERSE 26)

There must be some hidden power—some secret motive—that enables faith to take a path so contrary to nature. In verse 26, the "esteeming" of Moses uncovers for us the secret of his refusing and choosing.

Faith is not a step in the dark. Far otherwise, for faith forms a deliberate estimate of values, faith has a long outlook, and faith has an object. The faith of Moses formed a true estimate of things seen and unseen. He looked these things in the face and he weighed them up. On the one hand there was his great position in the world; on the other hand there was taking his place with the people of God. Having weighed them up he deliberately refused the world with its pleasures and treasures, and chose to suffer with the people of God.

What gave him the strength to make this choice? It was his faith: "He had respect unto the recompense of the reward," and in verse 27: "He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." In the light of the coming world, he formed a true estimate of the present world. He saw that connected with the reproach of Christ there were greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt.

—Adapted from *The Epistle to the Hebrews* by Hamilton Smith

MOSES: A HIDDEN MAN

Hidden in the house	<i>Hebrews 11:23</i>
Hidden in the Nile	<i>Exodus 2:3</i>
Hidden in the desert	<i>Exodus 3:1</i>
Hidden in the mount	<i>Exodus 32:1</i>
Hidden in the wilderness	<i>Exodus 15:22</i>
Hidden in the rock	<i>Exodus 33:22</i>
Hidden in the grave	<i>Deuteronomy 34:6</i>

FAILED DELIVERANCE

“And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian” (Acts 7:24).

There was true heroism in the act, when Moses stepped down from Pharaoh’s throne to share the lot of his brethren. Moses might have contented himself by sending them money from the treasures of Egypt, but it was a greater and nobler thing to give himself. And the true spiritual instinct of his soul gleamed out as he did.

At the same time, there was a great deal for Moses to learn. In later days he was to know the ways of the Lord—God would make them known to him (Psalm 103:7); but just now he was full of his own ways. In later days he was to be a hand, strengthened and used and empowered by God Himself (Psalm 77:20); but now he was acting in his own self-energy—rash, impetuous, and headstrong. In later days he was to be the meekest and least obtrusive of men, conscious to a fault of his own weakness and at every step looking up for guidance and help; but now he leaned wholly on his own understanding and, without taking counsel of God, thought to secure the emancipation of his people by the assertion of his will and the putting forth of his might.

But God’s time for the deliverance of His people was not due for forty years. Moses’ own education was very incomplete; it would take at least forty years to drain him of self-will and self-reliance and prepare him for the Master’s use. The feelings of pity that led to his impulsive act would never have been strong enough to bear him through the weary years of the upcoming desert march. Beneath the

repeated provocations of the people of Israel, it must have given way. At this point in his life, Moses never could have carried them as a nursing father or asked that he might be blotted out of the book of life for them or pleaded for them with God (Numbers 11:12; Exodus 32:11,32).

Is there not a lesson here for many of us who have not learned to distinguish between passion and principle, between impulse and settled purpose? We all know something of this. Oh, for grace to wait and watch with God. One blow struck when the time is right is worth a thousand struck in premature eagerness. It is not for you, O my soul, to know the times and seasons that the Father has put in His own power. Wait only upon God; let your expectation be from Him. If we undertake a work because He calls us to it, and we are sure it is our duty for His sake, then we have secured a principle of action that will bear us through disappointment, failure, and ingratitude. The way in which others treat us will make no difference to us, because all is done for Him alone.

It is a mistake to credit Moses’ natural qualities with the success of the exodus. We must always remember that, like Gideon’s host, Moses was at first too strong for God. God dare not entrust His power to men till they are humbled and emptied and conscious of their helplessness. Even the Son of God learned obedience by the things that He suffered (Hebrews 5:8). Paul, the most eminent of His saints, must suffer from a thorn in the flesh to remind him of his weakness, and confessed that only when he was weak could he be strong (2 Corinthians 12:10).

When a soul is inflated with a strong reliance on its own sufficiency, the power of God is unable to make an

entrance or use that soul as a channel for its work. It is when we are willing to be accounted as worms, as broken reeds, as little children, as foolish, weak, despised, as “things which are not,” that we become aware of being vehicles for the working of the might of His power. You must be brought to and end of yourself before God can begin with you. But when you have come to that point there is no limit to what may be wrought during a single life by the passage through it of His eternal power and Godhead.

—Adapted from *The Life of Moses* by F.B. Meyer

THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S DELIVERANCE

Forty years after Moses' failed attempt at delivering the people of Israel, the Lord said unto him, “Now shalt thou see what I will do.” Moses is then sent to his brethren with a sevenfold message from the Lord. He had wonderful good news to give, which serves as a magnificent picture of the glorious Gospel of Christ. In the seven “I will” statements of Jehovah in Exodus 6:1-8, we find:

1. Rest From Their Burdens. “I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians” (v. 6). Rest was much needed. Making bricks without straw was a hard and constant task. Likewise, in the service of sin there is no rest. The Gospel of God, which comes to us through Jesus Christ, offers relief from the burden of sin and guilt. “Come unto Me ... and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

2. Deliverance from the Power of the Enemy. “I will rid you out of their bondage” (v. 6). There is no other escape from the power of sin and Satan but through the intervention of the almighty power and grace of God

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness” (Colossians 1:13).

3. Redemption with Great Judgments. “I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments” (v. 6). Judgment and redemption are closely linked together in the saving work of God. Before Israel could go out of Egypt the judgments of God had to be poured out. Before Christ could save from the curse of the law, He had to become “a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13).

4. God's Claim on His Own. “I will take you to Me for a people” (v. 7). Possession is the end of redemption. “Ye are not your own ... ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

5. God's Assurance to His Own. “I will be to you a God” (v. 7). The sweet thought here is that of mutual surrender. We yield ourselves up entirely to Him. He yields Himself, as God, into the lives of His believing people. The life-giving and life-sustaining sap of the Vine is yielded up to the abiding and receptive branch (John 15:5).

6. The Promise of Continued Guidance. “I will bring you in unto the land” (v. 8). He not only saves, but He is also willing to guide the saved ones on to the end. He knows the way best suited for our edification and growth in grace. “Commit thy way unto the Lord” (Psalm 37:5). He will direct your steps.

7. The Promise of a Great Possession. “I will give it you for an heritage” (v. 8). All God's pilgrims have a grand inheritance before them. “In My Father's house are many mansions.... I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2).

—From *Handfuls on Purpose*

“For the first 40 years of his life, Moses was a somebody living in Pharaoh’s palace. For the next 40 years he was a nobody tending sheep on the backside of the desert. For the last 40 years, Moses learned what God could do with somebody who realized they were a nobody.” —D.L. Moody

THE BRAZEN SERPENT

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:14,15)

This is the second “must” in the third chapter of John. If man must be born again in order to see and enter the kingdom of God (v. 7), the Son of Man must be lifted up so that man—who is dead in trespasses and sin, and destitute of eternal life—may receive such life and not perish.

The incident in the wilderness, with Moses lifting up the brazen serpent, foreshadows the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross. In Numbers 21:4-9 we see that God had sent fiery serpents into the camp of Israel as a judgment. The bite of these serpents was deadly. But when the people cried “We have sinned,” God provided a remedy. He told Moses to make a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole. Whenever an Israelite was bitten, if he would look at the brazen serpent, he would live. The condition in the camp of Israel is a picture of the ravages of sin and the wages of sin, which is death (Romans 6:23). Because of the fatal poison of sin, man is spiritually dead.

The use of this incident to illustrate the wonderful truth of redemption manifests the heavenly wisdom of our Lord. It also confirms the typical

teaching of Old Testament events, that “All these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

The brazen serpent lifted up on a pole is the type of Christ in His sacrificial work on the cross. That serpent was the very image of what was destroying the Israelites, but the brazen serpent had no poisonous fangs. There was no poison in it, and though it bore the likeness of the serpent, it was in fact the source of life. Thus the Son of God appeared in the form of man, in the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3), but He was without sin; He knew no sin. When He was lifted up on the cross, He was made sin for us, and by the offering of Himself for sin, He put away sin and became the source of our salvation. Looking up to the brazen serpent, the Israelite saw that the very thing which had put death and ruin upon them was triumphed over and completely conquered. And so as we look to Christ crucified, made a curse, bearing sin, we see sin judged, condemned, triumphed over, robbed of its power and stripped of its strength.

As the Israelites looked to the brazen serpent, they experienced God’s power over that which brought death: “When he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Numbers 21:9). When we turn our eyes to the cross of Calvary, we behold the power of God in salvation. We see ourselves redeemed from the guilt and power of sin; death is ended and life is given—eternal life. Notice that the death-stricken Israelite was not saved by a natural process of improvement or by a gradual restoration, but rather by a sudden supernatural manifestation of divine power. How blessedly and fully

all this foreshadows and illustrates the Gospel of our salvation! Christ died for the ungodly, and believing on Him means salvation from eternal judgment and the gift of eternal life.

What does it take to believe? It is the same thing that the Israelites did when in simple faith they accepted God's Word, believed it to be true, and then looked to the brazen serpent on the pole. This is the way of salvation: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22).

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should

not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:16-18).

—Adapted from *The Gospel of John: An Exposition* by Arno C. Gaebelien

*There is life in a look at the crucified One;
There is life at this moment for thee!
Then look, sinner, look unto Him and be saved:
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.*

—Amelia M. Hull

SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT MOSES

See if you can answer these questions about Moses and his life. If you need some help, the references are given at the end.

1. To which tribe did Moses belong? _____
2. What was his father's name? _____
3. What was his mother's name? _____
4. What was his sister's name? _____
5. What was his brother's name? _____
6. How long was he hidden by his parents? _____
7. Who became his adopted mother? _____
8. How old was he when he refused to be called her son? _____
9. How many years did he remain in exile? _____
10. What was his wife's name? _____
11. What were the names of his two sons? _____
12. How many years did he serve as Israel's leader? _____
13. How old was he when he died? _____
14. Who buried him? _____
15. With what two persons was he seen 1500 years later? _____

Bible references: ¹ Exodus 2:1; ²⁻⁵ Numbers 26:59; ⁶ Exodus 2:2; ⁷ Exodus 2:10; ⁸ Acts 7:23; ⁹ Acts 7:30; ¹⁰ Exodus 2:21; ¹¹ Exodus 18:3,4; ¹² Deuteronomy 29:5; ¹³ Deuteronomy 34:7; ¹⁴ Deuteronomy 34:6; ¹⁵ Mark 9:4