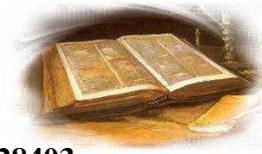


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The Choice of Moses - by Mike Willis, Danville, Indiana

By faith Mom, 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 recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible (**Heb. 11:24-27**).

"Joseph came a slave in Egypt, and rose from the prison-house to a place next the throne; Moses was adopted into the royal family in infancy, and had a place next the throne, but was driven from this into exile. Joseph was tried in the furnace of affliction, and thus prepared to enjoy prosperity; Moses was tried in the more perilous environment of high prosperity, and thus prepared to endure affliction" (Isaac Errett, Evenings With The Bible, Vol. 1, p. 167).

One of the Old Testament heroes

of faith is Moses. Esteemed as the lawgiver of the Old Testament, he became the antitype of the Messiah (**Deut. 18:15-19**). The faith of Moses was demonstrated by his decision to renounce his association with the Egyptians in order to be a deliverer of his people, the enslaved Israelites.

Moses' Birth and Early Life

Four hundred years before Moses' birth, the children of Israel had moved to Egypt under the protection of Joseph in order to survive the famine. God was working in his providence to protect the Israelites from assimilation into the Canaanite culture and religion (see **Gen. 38** for a picture of the threat to the nation). Consequently, the Israelites moved to Egypt where they were isolated in Goshen, protected geographically from assimilation into Egyptian culture; as shepherds they were held in abomination by the Egyptians (**Gen. 43:32; 46:34**), protecting them from social intermingling with the Egyptians. Isolated to

themselves, the Israelites were allowed to grow and develop into a nation without being assimilated into the culture of the people among whom they lived.

After a period of time, a new dynasty arose in Egypt which reduced the Israelites to slavery. They were fearful that the numerous Israelites might join the enemies of Egypt should a war occur; consequently, steps were taken to reduce the reproduction of the Israelites. The Pharaoh commanded the midwives of the Hebrews to slay any male babies which should be born. The midwives feared God more than modern abortionists, so they refused to slay the male babies (**Exod. 1:17**). When Pharaoh saw this attempt to reduce the reproduction of the Israelites, he issued a decree requiring the Israelites themselves to cast every male child into the river (**Exod. 1:22**).

Moses was born while this decree was in effect. For three months, his mother hid him in disobedience to the Pharaoh's decree because she perceived that he was a goodly child (**Exod. 2:2**). When Moses was three months old, his mother Jochebed put him in an "ark" (perhaps in remembrance of the deliverance of Noah) and set him afloat on the river near the place where the Pharaoh's daughter

bathed. His sister Miriam hid and watched to see what would occur.

When Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe, she spotted the basket and had one of her attendants bring it to her. When she opened the basket, Moses cried; she had compassion on him. She realized that he was a Hebrew baby and knew what had happened. Miriam approached the Pharaoh's daughter and asked, "Shall I so and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" (**Exod. 2:7**) Pharaoh's daughter consented and she brought Moses' mother. Pharaoh's daughter then agreed to pay Moses' mother wages to raise her own child. Moses was raised by his mother Jochebed probably until he was weaned at which time he was taken to Pharaoh's daughter and became her son. She named him Moses because she drew him out of the river.

Moses' Choice

When Moses was forty years old, he made a choice to renounce his ties with the Egyptian people and become identified with Israel. The decision reached fruition when he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite slave. After Moses saw that no one was watching, he killed the Egyptian, thinking his own people would perceive that he was ready, willing, and anxious to deliver his people from Egyptian

bondage (**Acts 7:25**). Without a call from God, Moses was ready to take the role of deliverer upon himself. Isaac Effett commented, "When God has a great work for men to do, he takes time to prepare them for it. Moses thought himself ready at forty; and most young Americans would be insulted if it were insinuated that they could not be ready at half that age", (Evenings With The Bible, Vol. I, p. 165). Forty more years passed before God appeared to Moses commanding him to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage.

Two days later he saw two Israelites fighting and tried to separate them, rebuking the one who did wrong. He replied, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" (**Exod. 2:14**) Moses realized his own people rejected him as a deliverer and that Pharaoh would punish him with death for his crime. Consequently, he fled the country.

Moses' Choice Was Costly

When one comes to a fork in the road, a choice of which road to take must be made. Indecision cannot be a choice; the result is as disastrous spiritually as it is physically when someone straddles the median rather than turning right or left. In making his choice to stand with his people, Moses gave

up political and social position. He went from "son of Pharaoh's daughter" to "slave." Wars have been fought by men seeking to gain what Moses voluntarily renounced. He gave up the pleasures of sin and the treasures of Egypt. Clovis Chappell remarked, "Here is a man facing a road that he knows will lead him to suffering, to agony, to disappointment, to battle and conflict and tears. Yet, with his eyes wide open, he makes the choice" (Sermons On Old Testament Characters, pp. 74-75).

How Moses Made His Choice

The external circumstances under which Moses lived did not contribute to his choice. His surroundings were hostile; the affluence of the court did not contribute toward his making the right choice. Everything visible on the Hebrew side was forbidding. Nevertheless, he made the right choice.

Moses made the right choice because he had a clear eye for distinguishing right and wrong. He knew the limitations in joy which the pleasures of sin can produce (**Heb. 11:25** - "for a season"). He had a keen eye for the real value of things. He looked beyond the temporary joy of immediate gratification of sensual pleasures to see the eternal happiness of service to God. He was willing to

experience suffering for the time being in order to take hold of the eternal reward (**Heb. 12:2**).

The Outcome of His Decision

Because of his choice, Moses received the reward of a Christ-like character. He did not allow his moral character to dissipate by participating in the sins common to men of his age. Instead, he renounced sin and worked to develop moral character. Because of his choice, Moses rendered a great service to his people Israel and became known as the great deliverer of his people. No name of an Israelite leader exceeds that of Moses until Christ Jesus. Because of his choice, Moses received the reward of heaven as exemplified by the comments made in **Hebrews 11:24-25** and his appearance with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. Isaac Errett spoke the truth when he wrote, "Standing by Moses in Egypt, his choice may seem to be foolish and absurd; but standing by the glorified Moses, on the Mount of Transfiguration, we know that his choice was the only wise one" (op. cit., p. 165).

Conclusion

Moses is not the only man to face a fork in the road of his life, to be required to choose whether to stand with God or with Satan. The same choice is faced by every man. From the example of Moses' choice, let us be reminded to look beyond the temporary pleasures which sin can provide to the eternal reward of righteous living.

Moses recognized, as does every man, that sin produces some pleasure. There is sensual gratification in adultery and fornication, stealing, revenge, etc. but that gratification is short-lived. The time of the enjoyment of the pleasures of sin will end, if not during life, then certainly at death. What is left then is reaping the harvest of having shown

to the flesh - eternal damnation, separated from the presence of God and in torment forever. There is no temporary pleasure which sin can produce which is worth what it costs! Moses saw that and I esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Moses had 20/20 vision. Do you? - **Via Guardian of Truth XXXII: 21, pp. 642, 661 November 3, 1988**

