

LESSON 17 MOSES – THE DELIVERER FOR ISRAEL

READING: Exodus 1:7-14, 22, 2:1-10; Acts 7:18-19; Hebrews 11:23-27

AIM: To show how God raised up a deliverer for Israel to lead His chosen people out of Egypt.

1. BACKGROUND

The development of Israel's nationhood in Egypt and associated events were not the outcome of chance. Over-ruling them all was the hand of God, who centuries earlier had spoken to Abraham regarding the future history of his descendants.

“Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them and they shall afflict them” (Gen. 15:13). This prophecy was now literally fulfilled in the experiences of the children of Israel.

God's declaration to Abraham however, went beyond the affliction and servitude of his seed. It continued: **“Also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge and afterward shall they come out with great substance”.** The time was approaching for this divine promise to be fulfilled.

2. A NEW KING WHO KNEW NOT JOSEPH – Exodus 1:7-14, 22

Not long after the death of Joseph, the Shepherd kings were overthrown and the Egyptians became rulers of their own country once more. Meanwhile, from a family of 70 Israel grew into a numerous people. They prospered (Exod. 1:7) then a new era began:

“Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph” (Exod. 1:8)

Egypt's new rulers had no sympathy for Hebrews. They despised and hated shepherds, and they feared lest the Hebrews should ally themselves with Egypt's enemies in time of war. National slavery was imposed and a decree issued that all Hebrew male babies were to be killed at birth.

Facing these calamities, a terrible cry of anguish rose from the land of Goshen. Day after day the Israelites were subject to heavy, wearisome toil under cruel taskmasters, building cities and making bricks and working in the fields while attempts were made to murder their sons.

3. THE DELIVERER PREPARED – BIRTH OF MOSES – Exod. 2:1-10

In the darkest hour of Israel's affliction, Moses (meaning “drawn out” Exod 2:10 mg.) was born. His parents, Amram and Jochebed, were of the tribe of Levi. It required faith to defy Pharaoh's decree but they succeeded in hiding Moses for three months (Heb. 11:23).

When concealment was no longer possible, his mother prepared an ark of bulrushes, papyrus stalks plastered with pitch. She took it, with Moses inside, and placed it on the river's edge among the reeds. Pharaoh's daughter found the child floating in the ark and decided to adopt it for her own. She sent Moses' sister, Miriam, who was standing by, to get a nurse from the Hebrews for him.

Miriam brought Moses' mother, who cared for him for Pharaoh's daughter. The over-ruling hand of God is ever-present! By reason of these events, as Moses grew to manhood his education was two-fold in nature:

- (i) As a royal prince, Moses received the best education that Egypt could give. Egyptian studies included reading, writing, arithmetic and astronomy, as well as physical and military training. **“Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22).**

- (ii) His spiritual education was provided by his mother in those early years. He was brought up as a Hebrew to know and love God. In his life of luxury and learning as an Egyptian, Moses never forgot he was an Israelite, nor that the Hebrew slaves were his brethren.

4. **MOSES' MISSION AS A DELIVERER – Exod. 2:11-15**

At the age of forty years, Moses **“refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter”**. He decided to identify himself with his own people and renounce Egypt (Acts 7:23; Heb. 11:24). Moses accepted the call of duty and forsook splendour, luxury and every advantage afforded him in Egypt.

Moses’ faith in God enabled him to make the choice. As the Scripture says, he chose **“rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”** (Heb. 11:25).

Moses “went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens”. He saw an Israelite being beaten by an Egyptian. He slew the Egyptian. The news spread, for next day his brethren resented his interference and Pharaoh sought his life. Moses fled from Egypt and, far from Pharaoh’s wrath and disapproval, found refuge in Midian.

By faith Moses saw the purpose of God (Acts 7:25). He knew God intended to deliver Israel by his hand, but Moses’ preparation was not complete; he had to wait until divinely called to act on his brethren’s behalf.

5. **LIFE IN MIDIAN – Exodus. 2:16-22**

Midian was south-east from Egypt in the peninsula of Sinai. There at a well, Moses met seven daughters of Reuel (also called Jethro) priest of Midian, from whom he received hospitality and one of whose daughters he married. Most of the first 40 years of Moses’ life had been spent in the Court of Egypt. The next 40 years he spent as a **shepherd**. By leading sheep, Moses was learning how to lead people. He learned to trust in God, to have patience and self-control. The Moses who appeared the second time, 40 years later, was a far more experienced man than the one so ready to do battle for his oppressed people on the earlier occasion.

The Midianites were descendants of Abraham, the family of Keturah (Gen. 25:2). As priest of Midian, Jethro showed some degree of sympathy and understanding of true worship (Exod. 18: 9-12) and possibly the Abrahamic covenant. Later, Jethro’s son was invited by Moses to join with Israel in their wilderness journey (Nu. 10:29-32).

Possessing such characteristics as faith, courage and meekness combined with his extraordinary education, “in all the wisdom of the Egyptians”, his spiritual training provided by his mother, his ability to stand the rigours of the wilderness, Moses was ideally suited and qualified to be God’s instrument to lead His people from Egypt.

6. **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

As the adopted son of an Egyptian princess, yet nurtured by his mother, the way was open for Moses to be a great man among the Gentiles, or to follow the way of God. He could become a prince, perhaps a Pharaoh, but if he followed the teaching of his mother, he would become the associate of slaves.

In Pharaoh’s Court, he heard the Hebrews spoken of with scorn and hate and he knew of the hard bondage into which they had been brought. On the other hand, he saw the riches, luxury and culture of Egypt. Egyptian influences about him were strong, but as a believer in the God of Israel, he knew that the gods of Egypt were useless.

In these circumstances, the final words of Joseph (Gen. 50:24) assumed great significance, and Israel looked for one who would redeem them from bondage (see Gen. 15:13-14). Moses recognised the hand of God in his own life, learning in Midian to “wait upon God”. We likewise should learn to **“wait upon God” whose Son will soon return from Heaven as our Deliverer** (Luke 19:10-15).

REFERENCE LIBRARY

“Moses my Servant” by Harry Tennant
“The Visible Hand of God”. Chapter 9.
“The Ways of Providence”, chapter 9,
“Elpis Israel”, parat 2, chapter 4.
“Moses My Servant”. Chapter 1,
“The Letter to the Hebrews”. Chapter 5 (d).
“Scriptural Coincidences”, para 1, chapter 13.

QUESTIONS

1. How and why was Israel afflicted in Egypt?
2. How was Moses prepared for his mission to deliver Israel from Egypt?
3. What lessons do we learn from the reasons for Moses' flight to Midian and his life there?
4. What does history, outside of the Bible, reveal of the time of Israel's cruel bondage in Egypt?
5. What was the benefit of Moses' sojourn in Midian?