

Old Testament types of the Lord Moses as a boy

*[Please note : sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.
English Standard Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

Introduction

Hello and welcome to Truth for Today, where we are continuing with our series on Old Testament types, or figures, of the Lord Jesus. Today I shall be talking about Moses, one of the most significant figures in the Old Testament. To keep this talk to manageable proportions, the Truth for Today administrators have divided the life of Moses into two parts, meaning that I deal only with the younger Moses, while next week Jonathan Hughes will consider Moses as an adult. A further point I need to raise, at this juncture, is that I will leave the figure of the young Moses as a type of the Lord Jesus until well into my talk, when I will draw the threads together in order to acknowledge the links between the life and times of Moses and the Saviour.

My difficulty has been where to fix the cut-off point and, after much thought, it was the Scripture in Hebrews chapter eleven and verses 24 & 25 that fixed it for me. I now quote this Scripture from the English Standard Version:

“By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.”

The phrase I utilise to justify my decision is the choice of Moses to flee Egypt. This is obviously indicative of his self-life as a rational individual. [I will be saying much more about Moses leaving Pharaoh’s palace later.](#) If he could choose to leave the comfort of his pampered life in the royal residence to share the mistreatment of the Hebrews, he was obviously capable of knowing his own mind. In other words he was now an adult. Suffice to say now that Moses had reached the age of choice, proof enough that he was ending his dependence upon the household of Pharaoh.

Egypt in the Time of Moses

The world into which Moses was born was far different than that experienced by the family of Joseph when they arrived in Egypt as guests of their brother’s hospitality. Joseph, whom they had sold as a slave, had risen to undreamed of heights in the hierarchy of power. Despite the duplicity of his brothers selling him as a slave, Joseph shared the corn with them that was stored in Egypt, keeping his family alive. Many, many years passed, during which the popularity and welcome of the Israelites in Egypt had drastically waned. Initially, they occupied Goshen as keepers of sheep, an occupation that was detestable to the Egyptians. Even during these years there were those who had the hope burning in their hearts that the sojourn in Egypt would be just that, a sojourn. The land that some of them looked for was the Promised Land. Moses later wrote of that hope when he recorded the history of his people:

“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. But I will bring judgement on the nation that they serve, and afterwards they shall come out with great possessions’” (Genesis 15:13 & 14).

Those Hebrews who maintained the ancient faith in the God of Abraham, among whom were Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses, ever looked for this time.

Eventually a king was on the throne that knew not Joseph; a king that was more concerned with the possible threat that the Israelites could constitute if they ever allied with Egypt’s enemies.

“And [the king] said to his people, ‘Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.’ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses” (Exodus 1: 9-11).

From this Scripture, and others, we can trace the first of Pharaoh’s strategies to control the growth of the Israelites, which was to afflict them with heavy burdens. These verses also tell us that they were an important part of the economy of Egypt, for the king was not willing to let them escape from his kingdom. [We can also appreciate the decline in the standard of life for the Israelites. Now instead of dwelling in a pastoral region, keeping their sheep, they were brutally uprooted to what was more or less a building site. Worse was to come when Pharaoh found that the oppressed people continued to increase in number.](#)

Strategy number two was then introduced which was to oppress them further by working them ruthlessly as slave labour. Sometimes in the fields, sometimes with mortar and bricks, or labouring wherever the slave masters wished. Yet even now Pharaoh’s desires were not met, for the total population of the children of Israel still increased, meaning strategy number three was introduced, which was also an increase in the wickedness that was levied against the Israelites. Now the midwives were ordered to kill all the male babies born to Hebrew women. Unfortunately for Pharaoh the midwives feared God more than the wrath of Pharaoh. Consequently, in the words of the ESV “...And the people multiplied and grew very strong” (Exodus 1: 20). The final strategy is contained in verse 22 of the first chapter of Exodus:

“Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, ‘Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.’”

The Hebrews now were in fear of every Egyptian who had been given the power of life and death over Hebrew babies. They had been reduced from a proud and independent people to a race subject to the brutal slave drivers of Egypt, where even the lives of their sons were subject to the caprice of the Egyptians. [The long stay in Egypt had not only caught them in the web of slavery, it also had a deleterious effect upon the old faith where God had revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.](#) According to Joshua 24:14 the people were told to, “Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.” It must also be pointed out that not all of the Israelites moved into idol worship, for the Scriptures say that the midwives, charged with killing the male babies, did not do so because they feared God. Such was the world that Moses was born into.

Moses as a Baby

The first details about Moses are contained in verses 1 & 2 of Exodus chapter 2:

“Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months.”

It might be well at this point to quote a verse from the “faith” chapter of the New Testament, namely Hebrews 11:23, for this serves as a commentary on verse 2:

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.”

This helps us to comprehend the deeper meaning of the phrase “he was a fine child” referring to Moses. Stephen in his sermon in Acts seven records that, “he was beautiful in God’s sight” (verse 20). Every parent considers their child special with good qualities, and no doubt Amram and Jochebed thought the same, though this is not the complete meaning of “[Moses] being a fine child”, for faith was involved in that conclusion. They, Moses parents, could see something that God could see, which is where faith comes in. [Thus their faith was crucial in this judgment of their child. It caused them to act in a confident manner.](#) Moses in a prayer he wrote much later in his life reflects the faith of his parents:

“Return, O LORD! How long? Have pity on your servants! Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days” (Psalm 90:13 & 14).

Without a doubt this psalm is full of the faith of Moses in his God. It reflects the belief that the LORD would come to the aid of his children. To me it appears to be the consideration of a mature follower of the God of Abraham, yet I also suggest that the elements of this living trust were in Moses before he left Egypt to live in the wilderness as a shepherd. According to Acts 7:25 he, Moses, was aware even then that God was going to use him as the deliverer of His people.

Amram and Jochebed, in the distressed and brutal world where the writ of Pharaoh ran, were looking faithfully for the return of the Hebrews to the Promised Land. They trusted in the God who would have mercy on His children. They waited for the morning when they would be awoken with living evidence of His steadfast love. [They had well-learned the stories that circulated among some of the Hebrew families. Stories of the God of the patriarchs, of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and of Joseph who had first called them to Egypt. Stories that are still studied and loved by Bible students who wish to know more of the ways and purposes of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.](#) They fervently believed that they, and all the other Hebrews, would be taken to the Promised Land.

Faith was also involved in causing them not to be afraid of the king’s edict to kill all the male children. We must not think that Amram and his wife were broken with anxiety and anguish over the sentence of death on their latest baby. Their actions indicate that they believed Moses would be kept alive. [If God had a purpose that involved their young son, then no power anywhere could possibly kill Moses.](#) This faith is further demonstrated when Moses was hidden by the river Nile:

“When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank” (Exodus 2:3).

From such Scriptures we can trace the purposes of God and how they were being worked out in the life of Moses. His parents possessed a living faith in the God who, many years before, had blessed Abraham with a sacred covenant. They were certain that sooner or later God would intervene to end the dreadful years of servitude and lead them back to Canaan. Their faith is shown in placing Moses in a basket by the water's edge. The rational result would have been that he would be found and thrown into the Nile by a patriotic Egyptian. Instead, as we learned in Sunday school, he was rescued from the reeds by Pharaoh's daughter.

Moses the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter

The world that Moses entered, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, was greatly different than that experienced by his contemporaries. Not for him the hours of toil at the brick kiln or working as an agricultural labourer. A tour through the Egyptian galleries at the British Museum would furnish us with details of the sophisticated level of civilisation that he was now introduced to. Try to imagine how Egyptian builders ensured that the base of their pyramids was level and square. Mathematics, pottery, medicine, agriculture and writing along with the manufacture of personal decorations like combs or bracelets, even an efficient system of collecting taxes. [The shadoof allowed irrigation to be introduced that increased the yield at harvest time or even produce a second harvest in the year.](#) Imports of such merchandise as myrrh, spices and balm from Gilead were carried into Egypt by caravans of merchants (Genesis 37:25). We could go on but I judge that the foregoing gives some idea of the attraction of Egypt for the affluent citizen. Regarding its effect on Moses then Stephen's comment is pertinent:

“And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds” (Acts 7:22).

There does not appear to be anything that Moses did not learn, so for all intents and purposes Moses appeared to be an Egyptian. Even his name of Moses was given to him by Pharaoh's daughter.

Despite Moses learning all the arts and sciences that the schools of Egypt afforded him, he never relinquished his nationality as a Hebrew. No doubt the main influence in this was Jochebed during the years he spent with her before he was weaned. We know from future activity when he recorded the events and truth outlined in the first five books of the Bible, such material from the mouth and influence of Jochebed, inspired by the Holy Spirit, entered into the weft and warp of the mind of Moses. This self-consciousness of being a Hebrew is best seen in the incident recorded in Exodus 2:11 &12 :

“One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.”

From this verse we learn that he was “grown up” and that his actions confirmed that he was a Hebrew. I suggest that this is the end of Moses's boyhood. Consequently, we are now at the stage in our talk today where I must bring the threads of this short biography of Moses' childhood to a conclusion, by showing those features of Moses when he was young which were typical of the Lord Jesus. [If you remember, I said a few minutes ago that this was the explicit aim of the talk.](#)

Moses as a Portrait of the Lord Jesus

The first feature I desire to bring to your attention is that Moses was born into a world where all his fellow Hebrews were slaves who had to implicitly follow the commands of their Egyptian slave masters. They needed a deliverer and Moses became that man. In his boyhood he might not have

performed that function as vividly as he did later in his life, yet I would propose that the last action of his tenure in the house of Pharaoh's daughter and the first of his emergence as an adult was to actively join the struggle of the Hebrews when conflict arose as we have just read (Exodus 2:11 & 12). [He might only have delivered just one of his fellow Hebrews, yet I claim that he was showing the signs of a deliverer.](#) How then is this a picture of the Lord Jesus you may say? My answer is contained in verses 14 & 15 of Hebrews chapter 2:

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

Such verses make abundantly clear that the Lord Jesus has, through His resurrection from among the dead, delivered his followers from the fear of death. If we have no other pictures than that of a deliverer, we have sufficient testimony from the early life of Moses to the great and wonderful Deliverer who bore the name Jesus of Nazareth.

[I have placed this feature first because it is first in the Christian scheme of things. According to Romans 10 and verse 9 it is crucial that we believe that God has raised Him from the dead, if we are to be true followers of the Lord. I ask you, as I ask myself, whether or not I believe in the resurrection of Jesus. I trust the answer is yes!](#)

Another typical feature of Moses when he was a baby is his deliverance from death when he was hidden in the reeds at the edge of the Nile. The infant Jesus was in His turn hidden from the sight of Herod's soldiers when Mary and Joseph went to live in Egypt. Just as Pharaoh sought to put an end the life of all boy babies, including the unnamed Moses, so Herod sought to put an end to the life of the baby born at Bethlehem. [The wise men were confident they had found God's chosen One.](#) There is another factor in this incident that parallels Moses and the Lord. Namely, Moses left Pharaoh's palace, as we have seen, while according to Matthew 2 verse 15 the Lord was called out of Egypt where Mary and Joseph had taken the infant Jesus to escape the wrath of Herod.

We have already discussed a Scripture regarding Jochebed seeing Moses was a fine child, which I suggest yet again was the conclusion of faith. She believed that God had a special purpose for her child. If we read the song of Mary in Luke chapter 1 verses 46 to 56 then it is plain that the mother of Jesus had an insight into the greatness of her first born. There is also another aspect of this feature of the beauty of Moses. In Acts 7 verse 20 it states that Moses “was beautiful in God's sight.” My counterpart to Moses being beautiful in God's sight is the declaration in Luke 3 verse 22 where God pronounced that He was well pleased with His beloved Son. [Therefore just as God approved of Moses so He approved of Jesus.](#) Regarding this latter point we must rigidly maintain that to see beauty in Jesus is by faith alone. Naturally speaking, “there is no beauty that we should desire Him” (Isaiah 53: 2).

It would seem superfluous to point out that both matriarchs had faith. It is obvious from the attitude of the younger Moses that he had been taught to cleave to the faith of Abraham and Jacob which was not true of all the Hebrew young men.

“Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord” (Joshua 24: 14).

[Notice that the gods they had to put away were the ones they had served in Egypt.](#) Obviously, there must have been idol worshippers amongst those who entered the Promised Land if Joshua needed to speak to them in such a fashion. What can be confidently claimed, on the evidence of

Scriptures already cited, is that Jochebed, the mother of Moses, was not among them. One telling piece of evidence is the way that Jochebed followed the example of Noah when he covered his ark with pitch. The basket that safely carried her son was also covered in pitch as was Noah's Ark. I know that Genesis was not yet written but I suggest that Moses heard the flood story first from the lips of his mother. It can also be claimed that Mary, the mother of the Lord, was a woman of faith as is intimated by the words of her song in Luke 1: 46-55. We have only time to repeat verses 47 to 49:

“...and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.”

Both Jochebed and Mary were believers in, and followers of, the living God who had revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

There is a remarkable comment regarding Moses in Hebrews 11: 26,

“He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.”

When the immense wealth and stored treasure of Egypt is considered, then Moses must have had a grasp of the eternal verities of God. On one side of the balance was the reproach of Christ and the eternal reward granted to the man or woman of faith; on the other side was the treasure and resources of Egypt. [We all know which side of the balance or scale was favoured by Moses.](#) Where is the corollary to this in the Lord's life it might be asked? My answer is found in Luke 4 verses 5 to 7:

“And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him. ‘To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I will give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.’”

So it was that in the lives of both Moses and the Lord Jesus there was a rejection of that which was earthly and temporal for that which was godly and eternal.

[We must now bring this talk to a conclusion. I trust I have succeeded in highlighting some features in the life of Moses while he was still a child that portray something of the moral beauty of the Saviour.](#)

Nothing can ever be reproduced of the fullness of the perfection of the Lord, but there are episodes in the life and times of many of the personalities of the Bible which shadow the life of Jesus. I trust that as we have looked at the life of the young Moses, we have also appreciated just a few of the shadows cast by the immense figure whom we know as Jesus of Nazareth.

Thank you for your company during this Truth for Today broadcast number T1304 and entitled Moses as a Boy.

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