

- 11 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.
- 12 He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.
- 13 When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?"
- 14 He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known."
- 15 When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.
- 16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.
- 17 The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock.
- 18 When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, "How is it that you have come home so soon today?"
- 19 They said, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock."
- 20 He said to his daughters, "Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."
- 21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah.

- ²² She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."
²³ During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.
²⁴ And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.
²⁵ God saw the people of Israel-- and God knew.

Exodus 2:11-25

A couple of years ago a movie came out with the simple numerical title: [300](#). It celebrated the miraculous true tale of three hundred brave Spartans that staved off an Assyrian army of 250,000 men for a week in order that the Spartan army back home might be raised to defend the homeland. Besides this, you have other movie title with simple numbers as the title: [Pi](#) (i.e. 3.14159), [9](#) (coming out this summer), [10](#), [1·8·7](#), [1201](#), [1941](#), [1984](#), [2001](#), [2010](#), and of course you have [24](#) on TV. Someday I want to see a movie called 40. Not, "40 Days and 40 Nights." Definitely not "40 Year Old Virgin." Just [40](#).

[Forty is an interesting number in the Bible.](#) It clearly has some kind of [theological significance](#). Three of the early

Judges reign for 40 years.¹ Each time it says that the “land had rest.” The first three kings of Israel reign for forty years.² During this time, Israel is a united monarchy. For forty days Jonah preaches in Nineveh (**Jon 3:4**). They people repent. Elijah, running from Jezebel, stays on Mt. Horeb for forty days and hears from God (**1 Kgs 19:8**). Jesus was on earth for forty days after the resurrection (**Acts 1:3**).

On the negative side, Ezekiel was commanded to lay on his side for forty days as a symbol of Judah’s wickedness (**Ezek 4:6**). The Philistines taunted Israel forty days before David rose to fight (**1 Sam 17:16**), even as years earlier they had ruled over Israel for forty years in the days of the Judges (**Jgs 13:1**). Forty lashes is the maximum number provided in the law for the beating of a criminal convicted of a crime (**Deut 25:3**). For forty days and forty nights, rain fell upon the earth, drowning all living things in Noah’s Flood (**Gen 7:4**).

These last two references were penned by Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Bible. Moses is quite fond

¹ Othniel (**Jdg 3:11**); Barak (**5:31**), Gideon (**8:28**). Eli also judges for forty years (**1 Sam 4:18**).

² Saul (**Acts 13:21** and a possible interpretation of **1 Sam 13:1** [see NET Bible]); David (**2 Sam 5:4**); Solomon (**1 Kgs 11:42**). Three other kings reigned for forty years: Jeroboam II (inferred), Jehoash (**2 Kgs 12:1**), Joash (**2 Chron 24:1**).

of the number 40 in his telling of ancient history. Joseph's embalming lasts 40 days (**Gen 50:3**). Before Elijah did it, Moses went up on Sinai for forty days--not once, but twice (**Ex 24:18**; **Deut 9:18**). The 12 spies went into Canaan for forty days (**Num 13:25**). Joshua, one of them, was forty years old at the time (**Josh 14:7**). Because of the sin of the 10 spies, forty years of wandering in the desert was the sentence placed upon Israel (**Num 14:33**). (Following as the New Israel, Our Lord Jesus stayed in the desert for forty days (**[Matt 4:2]**). And as the grace that has been given to us by Christ's obedience has been shown to us, so also God granted them the gracious manna which accompanied the Israelites in the wandering for forty years (**Ex 16:35**).

Amazingly, every one of these "forties" has a **common theological thread**. They all show in one way or another a time of **testing or probation or chastisement**. Now, you say, this is a strange way of beginning a sermon on **Exodus 2:11-25** where the number forty is not mentioned even a single time. Yet, the life of Moses may be divided into three equal parts. He is **in Egypt for forty years**. He is **in Midian forty years**. He is **wandering with the people in the desert forty years**. Stephen makes this a central part in his death-speech Acts 7. He makes it clear (following the

traditions of the Rabbis) that “When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel” (Acts 7:23). Again, “When forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai” (7:30). Then, of course, we learn from the OT Scripture that he wandered in the desert with the people for forty years (Deut 8:2-5; Ps 95:10) and died at the age of 120 (Deut 34:7).

I tell you this, in part (the other part is that I wish to use the NT to interpret the OT), because the story today is taken up with the entirety of the first two forty year periods of Moses’ life. In other words, it seems to me that “forty” is a grand organizing principle for Exodus Chapter 2. If we want to understand how the events of this part of Moses’ life are all connected, we need to understand that God had given this great man of God two probationary periods of life that would prepare him for his final Great Probation in the wilderness with the complaining people of that generation. That is, what we see before us today are not merely the random events to help tell a story. These are the sovereign workings of God in the life of Moses, preparing him to be the man that would deliver the people out of Egypt.

Now that you have “forty” in your mind, I want to discuss Moses’ life in another way, in order to help you see how God’s preparation of Moses during these two forties is perfectly suited to help make him become the great deliverer of Israel. You may notice at the end of this chapter (2:24) that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are mentioned for the first time since Genesis. It says, “God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.” It tells us that it was because of the “cries” of Israel for help were heard by God (vs. 23) that he remembered his covenant. And yet, it seems to me, that God was fully aware of his covenant already. It is not as if God had forgotten something and needed to be reminded of it.

This is a theological truth that is obvious. And yet, I want you to see how God’s awareness of Israel’s plight and of his own oath to save them (Gen 15:13-14) is richly embedded in the very life of Moses, God’s mouthpiece on earth. To put it another way, God is raising up this man in such a way that Moses’ own life recalls that of Joseph, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham! To put it yet another way, God has so remembered his sworn promises that he makes Moses’ life re-enact that of the Patriarchs as a way of constantly

reminding us that he has never once forgotten his word. He is the God that knows. Let me show you.

Moses Like Joseph

The first thing we see is how God moves Moses' life to become a reenactment of **Joseph**. You will remember that Joseph was born an Israelite, yet was sold into slavery by a group of Midianite (remember them for later) traders (**Gen 37:28**). From there he goes down to Egypt, but eventually rises to become a very prince of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. He is treated as Royalty by the Pharaoh. He is even granted as a wife the daughter of a high priest of Egypt.

Moses, too, is born an Israelite. But by a series of fortunate events, he ends up being raised the grandson of the Pharaoh in Egypt! Later in his life, he too marries the daughter of a high priest. His childhood gave him the best that this world had to offer. He had wealth, power, and culture. Moses, being a most humble man, makes nothing of this himself. But Stephen reports to us the tradition that grew up around Moses. **Acts 7:22** says, “Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.”

We know ancient literature something of this. For example, **Ezekiel the Tragedian** writing in the second century BC writes, “Throughout my boyhood years the princess did, for princely rearing and instruction apt, provide all things, as though I were her own” (*Exagoge* 36-38). **Philo**, the ancient Jewish historian and theologian, tells us all sorts of interesting things about Moses (things he says he received from “sacred scripture” and “heard from the elders of my nation”³). “[Pharaoh’s daughter] adopted him as her son, having first put in practice all sorts of contrivances to increase the apparent bulk of her belly, so that he might be looked upon as her own genuine child, the child being now thought worthy of a royal education.”⁴

Of this education and of the man himself Philo writes, “He had all kinds of masters, one after another, some coming of their own accord from neighboring countries and the different districts of Egypt, and some being even procured from Greece... But in a short time he surpassed all their knowledge” and being “without a teacher, comprehended by his instinctive genius many difficult subjects.”⁵ He learned **arithmetic, geometry, poetry, and**

³ Philo, *Life of Moses*, 1.1, 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.20.

music. He learned philosophy, hieroglyphics, astronomy, and the literature of the Egyptians, Greeks, Assyrians, and Chaldeans.⁶ Interestingly, Philo says that Moses learned, like a cultured man, to control his passions so that they would not control him. He learned temperance and fortitude, self-denial and abstinence. He never indulged in too much food. And like a good ascetic Jew, he learned to tame his lusts by punishing his body.

I say this is interesting, because the one thing that Moses tells us about himself at this time is quite the opposite indeed! **Exodus 2:11** begins, “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.” Again, **Moses is like Joseph**, who upon seeing his brothers’ distress began to weep over their burden. This verb, “he saw” (*yara*) does not just mean that Moses saw with his eyes. It means that he saw with his heart, with his emotion. “It is the kind of watching that demands intense personal involvement with what one sees. In a word it requires compassion, as in Hagar who looks over her son and says, ‘I cannot watch the boy die’” (**Gen 21:16**).⁷

⁶ Ibid., 1.23-24.

⁷ Philip G. Ryken, *Exodus*, 60.

Hebrews lets us in on Moses' motives saying that, "By faith Moses, refused to be called Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin" (**Heb 11:25**).

Moses like Jacob

But now the resemblance to Jacob picks up. Moses "looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand" (**Ex 2:12**). This is a clear reference, not to Moses' impeccable moral fortitude, but to his all too human disposition to sin. Moses murdered this man.

Now, many commentators throughout the centuries have tried to exonerate Moses from wrong doing.⁸ There are reasons for this. What he did was **not premeditated**. Moses was a **prince of Egypt** and so was perhaps within his rights, though Moses was not acting for Egypt, but for himself. Furthermore, Stephen says, "When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his

⁸ Including Church Fathers (Gregory Nazianen, *Epist.* 76; Tertullian, *Contra Marc.* 4.28; Ambrose, *De Officiis* 1.36), Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Henry, Patrick, and Scott.

defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian” (Acts 7:23-24). Is this the case of “an eye for an eye?”

For this reason, Matthew Henry represents the early Reformation tradition saying, “He found himself no doubt under divine direction and impulse in what he did... It was by special warrant from Heaven that Moses slew the Egyptian.”⁹ He recounts how the Jews had a similar take, but embellishing it in a curious way adding--that like Peter who killed Ananias and Sapphira with the word rather than a sword--so did Moses slay the Egyptian with the word of God.¹⁰ People go to great lengths sometimes to diminish sin.

A few, including Augustine (*Contra Faustum* 22.70), take the view that what Moses did was wrong. They notice, correctly I believe, that Moses had not yet been called by God, so what Matthew Henry says is reading back into the text what is not there yet. They also notice that in the Exodus passage itself, we read that “Moses looked this way and that.” He also “hid him in the sand.” They interpret this in the most obvious sense, that Moses’ conscience was pricked and he did not want to be caught. He wanted it to

⁹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Exodus 2:11.

¹⁰ Philo represents the early tradition when he says that Moses thought his action was pious, and indeed it was (*Moses*, 1.44).

be a secret, because in the process of to help, he committed murder. He thought the ends must justify the means.

I believe that **making a decision** on this (and therefore moralizing to you something that I could better do from the Law later in this book), **is difficult** because the Scripture itself does not really tell us what it thinks of Moses' act. So I will skip the speculation and talk about what we are certain of. This event **leads to Moses becoming an exile**.

The story says that “When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, ‘Why do you strike your companion?’ He answered, ‘Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’ Then Moses was afraid, and thought, ‘Surely the thing is known’” (Ex 2:13-14). Moses is trying to deliver them and they are oblivious to anything he might have done for their good. How ungrateful. It is a theme that Exodus will continue again and again! And I will come back to it later today.

Yet, it is easy to look back on this as the reader of both Exodus and Acts and think about how dumb these guys were. But you have to remember, it may not be known by most of the Israelites that Moses is even one of them. I

mean, he has been raised in Pharaoh's house for forty years, and his mother would have wanted to keep this a secret! In turn, what he did would not have been viewed as pity and compassion but as the over-blown zeal of a rogue Egyptian Prince who has nothing better to do with his time than to go on a killing spree. **Isn't this what Pharaoh's kind do?**

When they respond, **"Who made you judge over us?"** it is a perfectly natural response. **The answer is, no one has. Not yet!** It is interesting that later on Moses is again confronted with the same basic question. His own sister and brother say, **"Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses?"** (**Num 12:2**). Just a couple chapters later his cousin Korah comes to him and says, **"Why do you exalt yourself above the assembly of the LORD"** (**Num 16:3**). In other words, **who made you king and judge?** But Moses' response is very different from here. In Numbers, Moses says, **"Tomorrow we will see who the LORD has appointed as ruler over the people."** But here Moses becomes afraid and flees for his life.

The problem is, *Moses has not yet been called by God*. He has no sovereign pass to commit murder here.¹¹ He is not acting for the state. He has not been publically commissioned to do God's will. How can you recognize someone called by God if they have not been publically recognized? The answer is, you can't. All you have is someone's subjective feeling of calling and their own private word. Even Jesus' friends and family did not recognize him before his baptism. But at his public commissioning service, John and then the rest are able to recognize their Deliverer. Here, Moses tries to deliver the people, but it is premature, because he had not been called. *His first forty year probation ends in him fleeing for his life.*

Pharaoh hears about the act and seeks to kill Moses. *Why?* I mean, this is his grandson and he apparently has no idea that he is Hebrew. *Philo* again provides *a possible answer*. His elders taught him that the king was upset, *not because a man had died (that happened all the time), but because his own grandson did not agree with him or look upon his*

¹¹ I think of the actions of a man like Phinehas (*Num 25:1ff*), where he murders a man and woman brazenly committing inter-racial, inter-religious sexual sin in light of this. God praised Phinehas for this act. So, obviously, there were circumstances in the theocracy where such an act was acceptable. I do not think this is one of them.

friends in the same way. Those the king loved, Moses regarded with contempt. Those the king hated, he treated with pity.¹² The king's noblemen pressed the point. Sire, he tries to strip you of your crown. He has no humble designs or notions. He is continually seeking to busy himself in what does not concern him, and to acquire some additional power. He is eager for the kingdom before his time."¹³ They turned Pharaoh against Moses.

It's interesting speculation. But the Scripture does not elaborate, because it doesn't care. What it is concerned with is Moses' response. "Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian." Perhaps here you can now see how Moses is like Jacob. Moses has to flee the wrath of another because of the deed that he has committed. Whether his deed was good or evil (Jacob's trick is equally ambiguous), it is the retreat that is the same. You will remember that Jacob had deceived Esau out of his birthright, and for this, Jacob flees to Laban for many years because Esau was seeking to kill him. Moses' act began as a selfless thought of pity. But it is soon shrouded in violence and nothing lasting occurs with Israel's plight of slavery.¹⁴

¹² Philo, 1.45.

¹³ Ibid., 46.

¹⁴ See Brevard Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, 43.

Moses flees to Abraham's Children

What is further interesting is how **Moses flees to his long-lost relatives**, the same as Jacob. He flees across the wilderness to those that he thinks may in fact help him. The very people that Pharaoh is so afraid of in **Chapter 1:10**. Some comments are in order here. Moses flees to “**the land of Midian**.” In this way, we are reminded of **Abraham**. Midian was one of the sons of Abraham through his second wife Keturah (**Gen 25:2**). As such, when Moses marries Zipporah (**Ex 2:21**), he is marrying a relative of sorts. This marriage is acceptable, because this family seems to have worshipped the true God.

Reuel (**Ex 2:18**), the priest of Midian, means “**Friend of God**.” He may have been confused for a time, but he declares faith in this God alone in **Ex 18:11**. Yet, as a priest in the line of Abraham, it is quite possible that knowledge of Abraham's God had been retained in part, so that he was a true worshipper, even if it was cloudy and mixed with error.

Where is Midian? We know that it is **east** of Egypt, at least as far as the Sinai Peninsula. We know that it is within sight of Mt. Sinai, because in the next chapter Moses is tending

his flocks of sheep on its slopes. But that is not of much help to us today, because no one is entirely certain where Mt. Sinai is. I may have more to say about this next week, but for now, I find it interesting that Philo locates it in Arabia, the same place that Paul identifies in **Galatians 4:25**. It is probable that the location is east of the second fork of the Red Sea, today called the **Gulf of Aqaba**.¹⁵

Moses Like Isaac

“It says next that Moses sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. The shepherds came and drove them away” (**Ex 2:15b-17a**). Again, we have uncanny similarities with the Patriarchs. The story where Jacob meets Rachel bears a strong resemblance. “Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it... and Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess” (**Gen 29:1-2, 9**).

¹⁵ Philo, *Moses*, 1.47. For more see especially section IV.C.1-2 on Josephus and Philo in Charles A. Whittaker, “*The Biblical Significance of Jabal Al Lawz*,” a Doctrinal Dissertation presented to Louisiana Baptist University, 2003. Available in PDF online.

It is just here that I want to mention **Isaac**. Because the story where Isaac gets Rebekkah for a wife is the precursor to both Jacob and Moses. (And I can't fail to mention the curious story where Jesus talks with a Samaritan woman [a relative, but not a full-Jew] at a well about her seven husbands (**John 4**). Abraham commanded Isaac's servant to go to Laban and find Isaac a wife from his own blood-kin. It says, "And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water" (**Gen 24:11**). After a long story, we read that Rebekkah told her mother's household about these things (**vs. 28**), the same as Zipporah (**Ex 2:18**). But unlike Jacob, it says that **Isaac was 40 years old** at the time (**Gen 25:20**). This is the same as Moses.

So we have now seen **a connection to all four Patriarchs of Israel in the life of Moses**.¹⁶ All of this demonstrates in a very amazing way, that God has not forgotten his people. For, he is raising up a deliverer that embodies the very essence of the Patriarchs who will in turn, like each of these four Patriarchs, go back into Egypt. But Moses will go to set the people free.

¹⁶ Ryken, *Exodus*, 76; Enns, *Exodus*, 82; Dunnam, *Exodus*, 50.

But now, there are some other important things to notice about what happens when Moses goes to Midian. Perhaps the first to think about is how this is the **first Exodus** in the book of Exodus. Actually, it may be better to see it as the **second Exodus**. For, Moses has fled Egypt because of what happened when he murdered the Egyptian. But that murder was itself set up because Moses “**went out**” (*yatza*) to see his people and looked upon their burdens (**Ex 2:11**). This verb “went out” is the same verb used later to describe the Great Exodus event of the book! The point is that in increasing measure, Moses is leaving Egypt behind him, many decades before he would return to lead his people out.

Why is this idea of an early exodus important? It is because God will use this to help Moses identify with his own people. He cannot lead them if he is not like them. God did not ask Moses to lead the people to a place (both geographic and emotional) that Moses had not already been. And in these exodus’, Moses learns what it will take to lead the people. Indeed, **he learns what it is like to be the people.**

He learns **basic desert livelihood**. He learns the contours of the wilderness. He learns about water, about heat, about lack, about want. He learned what it was to be cut off from Egypt.

He learns what it is like to be **despised and rejected**. **Remember how the two Hebrews rejected his authority and leadership?** That is an important point, and I'll have more to say about this in a moment. But in the process of these two events, Moses learns what it is like to be an alien in a strange land. He even remembers this feeling for all time in the naming of his son **Gershom** which means either “**sojourner**” “**to drive out**” (from *garash*). The experience is embedded upon his family tree forever.

He also learns what it means to be **loved and accepted**, but not from his own people. In Midian, Moses learns about family, about submission to authority, about marriage, about how to lead with a gentle hand. He also learns about God both from the burning bush and from his father-in-law. Thus, this **period of forty years** is a true testing through humility and lack. Everything here is the opposite from Egypt. It is a desert. Egypt is a fertile valley. It is a hard existence. In Egypt, Moses had anything he wanted. In essence, Moses is leaving behind a world of narcissism,

hedonism, and materialism¹⁷ in order to become a lowly wind-torn, battered and beaten shepherd.

It is important to notice also that Moses quite intentionally tells us in Genesis, “Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians” (Gen 46:34). It would be Donald Trump’s son intentionally becoming a janitor in one of Trump’s hotels. His journey out of Egypt is complete. But why? Why would Moses do this? Let me say to you, it was not an accident that Moses was running away. And the answer(s) gets at the heart of my sermon today.

Acts: Moses’ Typifying Christ

First, the Scripture is clear to us that these things happened in order to foreshadow a greater deliverance than the exodus. This is the deliverance that I stand now before you and proclaim that if you will not resist and reject Jesus, then you will be delivered from your slavery to sin. In him alone is there final and complete deliverance from all things. And know that trusting in Christ alone is the most precious and life-helping thing you could ever do, because this Jesus—like Moses before him—has undergone just

¹⁷ Ryken, p. 62.

what you have. There are not only parallels between Moses and the Patriarchs, but between Moses and *Jesus*. But they are more than parallels. They are intentional providential designs preordained by an omniscient God so that Moses himself might lead you to Christ. And the NT shows you this.¹⁸

Stephen's sermon in Acts is pivotal. He recalls Moses saying, "Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?' But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, '*Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?*'" ([Acts 7:26-27](#)). Eight verses later he remembers the same thing, "This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, '*Who made you a ruler and a judge?*'—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush" ([7:35](#)). Finally he concludes with his

¹⁸ To see this, you really must learn to read the OT in light of the NT, the exact opposite hermeneutic I was taught growing up. (See for instance Roy Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation*, 73: "Recognizing the progress of revelation means that the interpreter will be careful *not to read back into the Old Testament from the New.*" John Feinberg [Continuity and Discontinuity], writes of Dispensationalists like Zuck, "Wherever they begin they demand that the OT be taken on its own terms rather than reinterpreted in the light of the NT" [p. 75]). It isn't that the NT is providing a meaning that was never in the OT (as if the OT saints could not arrive at NT conclusions), but that it is reflecting the correct interpretation of the OT which was often obscured by self-centered hermeneutical agendas and by the simple fact that the reality to which so much of it pointed had not been revealed in the flesh. There really is a mystery that was revealed to Paul and others that we now have that tells us about the meaning of OT passages.

application. (Believe it or not, Stephen's sermon has a point. This isn't the longest chapter in Acts just because this guy is stalling and stalling hoping his audience will forget that they wanted to stone him.) "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you... And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered" (7:51-52).

What's the point? Moses' very life is prefiguring Jesus' life. What they did to Moses, they did to Jesus. And it had to be this way so that you might be saved. It is really remarkable to think on this. Moses is rejected, Jesus is rejected. Moses becomes a shepherd, Jesus becomes a shepherd. Moses is accepted by strangers, Jesus is accepted by strangers. And on it goes throughout this book.

There is a turning in the Exodus story, an ironic rejection and acceptance that you cannot miss that really highlights all of this. Moses seeks to save his brothers, but they reject him. Then Moses enters a foreign land. Again he seeks to save and deliver (Ex 2:17). This time it is women, not men; Midianites, not Hebrews; strangers, not friends.

But **don't you see?** This is like Christ who said in response to his family and friends that took offense at him, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household” (**Mat 13:57**). So Jesus retreats to Tyre and Sidon, out of Israel altogether. Lo and behold, a Canaanite woman comes to him and believes his message (**Matt 15:21-22**). He went to the Gentiles because the Jews would not believe him. **Brevard Childs** writes, “Neither Moses nor Jesus were recognized, at least by their own people. But Moses was ‘recognized’ by the Midianites in spite of looking like an Egyptian! And Jesus found a response among the poor and outcast [and the Gentiles]. The basic point is the lack of recognition is disobedience because the act itself discloses the bearer to be from God. ‘Believe me for my work’s sake.’ The quality of the deed was self-authenticating. This is the message to John the Baptist. It is the same issue with Moses. The fact that God’s deliverer is not recognized reflects the condition of blindness on the part of his people.”¹⁹

It is a difficult thing to sit under the authority of another (be it a person, a government, an employer, or a confession of faith), mostly because we all want to have authority

¹⁹ Childs, p. 44.

ourselves. But if this is our attitude, then **how can we submit to Christ who often uses earthly authorities in his place?** We find ourselves in the same shoes as the two Hebrew fighting men. And Scripture says that who rejected Moses, killed Jesus. As **Peter Enns** says, “**The rejection of Israel’s leaders is essentially rejection of Israel’s God.**”²⁰ In the sphere of the Church, Orthodoxy is what you should seek and desire, to conform yourselves to the law of Christ, and to the faith once for all delivered. You should delight in your pastors and teachers, in membership, in correct doctrine and other things. Otherwise, when Jesus is revealed as he is, you will have none of him. This is a terribly humbling thought, and very frightening too. Because so often what we we accept and receive are not in line at all with Holy Scripture. So make it your life’s ambition to become more biblical, more humble, more obedient, more able to accept truth, more desirous of the means of grace, more willing to submit yourselves to others. And do not be like those men who said, “**Who made you judge over us?**”

Hebrews: Moses Faith in Christ

²⁰ Enns, *Exodus*, p. 86.

The other reason why Moses would do this is that it was a deliberate choice on his part. As such, he actually models what I have just said. **Hebrews 11** makes this abundantly clear: “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. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible” (**Heb 11:24-27**).

Whereas Exodus seems simply concerned with the events, Hebrews’ concern is with **Moses’ faith**. Remarkably, it talks about Moses’ **faith in Jesus²¹**! **Is the NT just making this up as it goes along?** No. In Exodus you do not read about Moses’ faith *per se*, but you do see his **emotional attachment to his own people** as he looked upon their burdens. You see his **zeal to deliver them** from the oppressors, because these were his own people. It is implicit that in doing these things that he was rejecting his Egyptian upbringing, and indeed all of the things that Hebrews tell us, because as smart a man as he was, he would surely have

²¹ Next week: How could he have faith in Jesus? He talked with Jesus face to face.

known that to cross the Pharaoh because of love for his own people would mean certain death.

So the drum beat of this book returns again in chapter 2. **Do you desire the things of Egypt** (modernism, technology, pleasure, amusement, scientific advancement) **more than you desire God?** Are you willing to intentionally suffer for Christ for a little while in order to gain an eternal reward? Do you care about the plight of God's people? Are you willing to suffer for Christ when he calls you to it? All of these things demonstrate faith in action. Where Moses showed faith, you are to show faith. When you trust in Christ, then faith begins working itself out in fruit and obedience. This is always imperfect, of course, yet it is there as a sign that you belong to God. God's people love him and love to do what he commands. We see in Moses his faith in God, mingled with sin (indeed, even grave sin!), but present nonetheless. For the second forty years now, we see that Moses is trained up in the knowledge and fear of the LORD.

God has not Forgotten

Yet, I want to leave you on a gospel note. Because anytime we begin to *look* towards ourselves, towards our

faith, our works, our fruit (which are ours and which we do possess, but which are all gifts from God), the temptation is to begin to *trust* in ourselves or to *condemn* ourselves as if God has not saved us at all. **But God has a chosen people whom he will never forget**, and this is how the chapter ends.

All this time that Moses is in the desert, **Israel is still groaning in Egypt**. It is now forty years that Moses has been in Midian. This makes at least 80 years of harsh slavery for them! Eighty years would take up back to 1929! And it says that **the king of Egypt died (Ex 2:23)**. But things did not get better. And the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. **Their cry for rescue came up to God**. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—as Moses had seen 40 years earlier, and God knew.

The ESV is better here than the NIV and others, which says that God was concerned for them. This is more than concern. This is **an intimate, emotional** (to use an anthropomorphism) **knowledge of his people's plight**. Jesus wept! And God had not forgotten. For 80 years he had

been preparing all for the greatest series of events in history up to that time. God has remembered this groaning, their slavery, their misery as aliens in a foreign land. And he is about to act.

Likewise, God knows your misery in your sin, your continual battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. He knows that Christ has not yet consummated all things. “The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry” (Ps 34:15). And that is why he gives you the gospel—an announcement outside of yourself about something done for you by someone else of which you have nothing to do with—so that you will remember that you are justified by faith and not by works, by Christ and not by yourself, by God’s grace alone and not by obligation that he somehow owes you something. God sees and God knows. He remembers. . . his covenant and not your sin. If you believe in him, then he has credited your sin to Christ, so that by faith in his atoning death and self-resurrection, he might credit Jesus’ righteousness to you in the Great Exchange. God has sent his Son so that you might have peace and life and joy during the forty or eighty or even one hundred twenty

years of trial and probation and disciplining chastisement that God has given you on your journey to heaven.