

MOSES' CHARACTER
The Old Testament Today
Banska Bystrica, 28th February 2021

וְהָיָה מֹשֶׁה מְזֵיךְ עַל כָּל אֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה

Nu 12:3 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth

Πίστει Μωϋσῆς μέγας γενόμενος ἠρνήσατο λέγεσθαι υἱὸς θυγατρὸς Φαραώ, ²⁵ μᾶλλον ἐλόμενος συγκακουχεῖσθαι τῷ λαῷ τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ πρόσκαιρον ἔχειν ἀμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν, ²⁶ μείζονα πλοῦτον ἠγησάμενος τῶν Αἰγύπτου θησαυρῶν τὸν ὀνειδισμόν τοῦ Χριστοῦ· ἀπέβλεπεν γὰρ εἰς τὴν μισθαποδοσίαν. ²⁷ Πίστει κατέλιπεν Αἴγυπτον μὴ φοβηθεὶς τὸν θυμὸν τοῦ βασιλέως· τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον ὡς ὄρων ἐκαρτέρησεν. ²⁸ Πίστει πεποίηκεν τὸ πάσχα καὶ τὴν πρόσχυσιν τοῦ αἵματος, ἵνα μὴ ὁ ὀλοθρεύων τὰ πρωτότοκα θίγῃ αὐτῶν. ²⁹ Πίστει διεβησαν τὴν ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν ὡς διὰ ξηρᾶς γῆς, ἧς πείραν λαβόντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι κατεπόθησαν.

Hebrews 11:24-29 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, **refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ **choosing** rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. ²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. ²⁹ By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

OUTLINE

0. INTRODUCTION

- 0.1. MOSES: OT REPRESENTATIVE
- 0.2. THE NAME "MOSES"
- 0.3. LIFE
- 0.4. FAITH AND HISTORY

1. THE GIFT OF PARENTS

2. YOUNG MAN'S DECISIONS

- 2.1. MOSES "REFUSED"
- 2.2. MOSES "CHOSE"
- 2.3. EXILE BECAUSE OF PREMATURE ACTION
- 2.4. THE CALL OF GOD
- 2.5. DISOBEDIENCE

3. ON-THE-JOB CRISES

- 3.1. BROKEN IDEALS → GOD'S REPUTATION
- 3.2. OVERWORK AND FRUSTRATION
- 3.3. CRITICISM AND MERCY
- 3.4. REBELLION
- 3.5. PERSEVERANCE AND FAILURE

4. A LOOK BACK (PS 90)

- 4.1. INTIMACY WITH GOD
- 4.2. THE MAJESTY OF GOD
- 4.3. DEPENDING ON THE GRACE OF GOD

5. TO REMEMBER

0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. MOSES: OT REPRESENTATIVE

- **Hebrews 3:3** For **Jesus** has been counted worthy of more glory than **Moses** – as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself (πλείονος γὰρ οὗτος δόξης παρὰ Μωϋσῆν ἤξιώται, καθ' ὅσον πλείονα τιμὴν ἔχει τοῦ οἴκου ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτόν)
- **Abraham** → “genetic” father; **Moses** → “spiritual” father
 - **Romans 2:29** But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.
 - **John 8:39** They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did"
- Moses → prophet, priest, ruler, savior, & legislator
 - Moses as a MAN (character) & Moses as a LEGISLATOR (“job”)
 - **Mt 17:2-3** And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them **Moses** and **Elijah**, talking with him.

0.2. THE NAME “MOSES”

- [Wiki] Egyptian names like Thutmoses ('child of Thoth') and Ramesses ('child of Ra') ...
- [Wiki] The problem of how an Egyptian princess, known to Josephus as Thermutis (identified as Tharmuth) and in later Jewish tradition as Bithiah, could have known Hebrew puzzled medieval Jewish commentators like Abraham ibn Ezra and Hezekiah ben Manoah. Hezekiah suggested she either converted or took a tip from Jochebed
- [NoerdlingerHenryS] A recent analysis on this subject establishes good evidence for the name Moses to be of Egyptian origin, just as the names Putiel, Hophni and Phinehas are Egyptian.

0.3. LIFE

- [SETERS *The Life of Moses*] ...his (1) call, the (2) plagues, the (3) crossing of the Red Sea, the (4) wilderness wanderings, and the (5) Sinai pericope
- [BUBER *Moses*] The Biblical narrative itself is basically different in character from all that we usually classify as serviceable historical sources. The happenings recorded there can never have come about, in the historical world as we know it, after the fashion in which they are described.
- born during genocide → God's providence, protection...
- **Acts 7:22** Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds
- **Acts 7:23** When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel
- **Exodus 7:7** Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh

0.4. FAITH AND HISTORY

- [HUIZINGA] "History is the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself of its past."
- Moses → miracles; God's word;

1. THE GIFT OF PARENTS

- Heb 11:23 By faith Moses, when born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was comely; and they feared not the ordinance of the king.

- **Exodus 2:7-10** Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" ⁸ And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. ⁹ And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. ¹⁰ When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

2. YOUNG MAN'S DECISIONS

- "either/or" ↔ "both/and"

2.1. MOSES "REFUSED"

- Heb 11: 25 (ἔχειν ἀμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν) to take of a thing, have a portion of, enjoy,
- royalty; wealth, position, power; pleasures...

2.2. MOSES "CHOSE"

- Heb 11:26 (ὀνειδισμόν τοῦ Χριστοῦ) to throw a reproach upon (potupa; hanba; výčitka) [DELITZSCH] →
- (1) the term may be justified by the typical connection between Christ and His ancient people
- (2) in the mystical unity of Christ and His people. So Stier : " The whole people of God, in all ages, forms one community , of which Christ is the centre ; and even the saints of the Old Testament were members of that one living body of which He is evermore the head."

2.3. EXILE BECAUSE OF PREMATURE ACTION

- Exo 2:11-15 NASB Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. (12) So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.
- **Acts 7:28-29** Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹ At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

2.4. THE CALL OF GOD

- **Exodus 7:7** Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh
- Exo 3:1-22 NASB Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
- **Exodus 3:11** But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"
- **Exodus 4:13-14** But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else." ¹⁴ Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite?"

2.5. DISOBEDIENCE

- **Exodus 4:24-26** At a lodging place on the way the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. ²⁵ Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" ²⁶ So he let him alone. It was then that she said, "A bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.

3. ON-THE-JOB CRISES

- [sparknotes.com] "a passive quality permeates each of his miracles"

3.1. BROKEN IDEALS → GOD'S REPUTATION

- **Exodus 32:19** And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain
- **Exodus 33:15** And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here
- → **Exodus 33:17-18** And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." ¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory."

3.2. OVERWORK AND FRUSTRATION

- **Exodus 18:13-14** The next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. ¹⁴ When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone,?"
- **Numbers 11:9-16** When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it. ¹⁰ Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹ Moses said to the LORD, "Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? ¹² Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,' to the land that you swore to give their fathers? ¹³ Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' ¹⁴ I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. ¹⁵ If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness." ¹⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you.
- **Numbers 11:27-29** And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." ²⁹ But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"

3.3. CRITICISM AND MERCY

- **Numbers 12:1** Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman.
- **Numbers 12:10** ...Miriam was leprous, like snow...
- **Numbers 12:13** And Moses cried to the LORD, "O God, please heal her- please."
- **Numbers 12:3** Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth (וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד מִכָּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה)

3.4. REBELLION

- **Numbers 16:1-3** Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. ² And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. ³ They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

3.5. PERSEVERANCE AND FAILURE

- "Great men make great mistakes" (POPPER?)
- **Numbers 20:4-13** Why have you brought the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we should die here, both we and our cattle? ...And the glory of the LORD appeared to them, ⁷ and the LORD

spoke to Moses, saying, ⁸ "Take the staff, and assemble the congregation, you and Aaron your brother, and tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water. So you shall bring water out of the rock for them and give drink to the congregation and their cattle." ⁹ And Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as he commanded him. ¹⁰...¹¹ And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock. ¹² And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them." ¹³ These are the waters of Meribah, where the people of Israel quarreled with the LORD, and through them he showed himself holy.

4. A LOOK BACK (PS 90)

4.1. INTIMACY WITH GOD

- a life of travel Egypt; Midian: wilderness →
- **Psalm 90:1** Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations
- **Psalm 90:13-14** Return, O LORD! How long? Have pity on your servants! ¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days (בְּכֹל-יְמֵינוּ וְנִשְׂמְחָה).

4.2. THE MAJESTY OF GOD

- a life of authority → Egyptian prince; national leader
- living in God's sight
- **Ps 90:4** For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night
- **Psalm 90:12** So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.

4.3. DEPENDING ON THE GRACE OF GOD

- **Psalm 90:7-10** For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed. ⁸ You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. ⁹ For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh. ¹⁰ The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away
- **Psalm 90:16-17** Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. ¹⁷ Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!

5. TO REMEMBER

- Moses' character with all its flaws was determined by ONE purpose: to know God and realize his promise.
- Moses' meekness/humility helped his ability to forget oneself and forgive and continue work despite disappointments.
- Moses despite his prominent position and greatness fully waited for the grace and mercy of God.