

Conclusion

To end, I will return to where I began. The world needs something better than what it has. At the beginning of this 21st century this world cries out for deliverance. Wars, earthquakes and famines bring misery to millions in the developing world. The developed world has overcome the problems of physical poverty, and suffers deep emotional and spiritual poverty instead. All this is happening when man has more resources to meet his needs than ever before.

What we are seeing is travail on a global scale. Paul described this travail in Romans 8: 19-23. The creation is groaning and travailing as it awaits the manifestation of the sons of God, who are now in preparation. The same thing happened on a smaller scale when the children of Israel groaned under their affliction while Moses was in preparation in the wilderness. At God's appointed time he came and brought them out and set them free.

Human government, democratic or dictatorial, will never solve the world's problems. Only divine government will bring justice, peace and prosperity. God will rule through his sons whom he is now preparing. Moses was a precursor of those sons. Jesus is their prototype and head. The time for their manifestation as his body is approaching.

For all who tread this pathway this is a time of preparation. We cannot expect it to be easy. It is long and narrow and hard to the flesh. The transformation of a son of Adam into a son of God requires the deep and sometimes painful operations of the master Surgeon. The reward, if we endure, is great. Jesus, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame. Moses considered the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Let us see beyond our current trials the glory that lies before us in the pathway of sonship.

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Nov 1999

Moses and the Path of Sonship



Imparting the Spirit

Old Testament history often suffered a lack of continuity. Blessings came with great men of God like Abraham, Joseph and David; but the blessing seldom continued beyond their generation. Their death brought an end to their work. Much of church history has gone the same way.

Two notable exceptions were Moses and Elijah. Moses laid hands first on seventy elders on whom the Spirit of the Lord fell. Later he laid hands on Joshua, whose name is the Hebrew version of Jesus. Joshua then became his successor and carried on his work.

Similarly when Elijah departed to heaven in a chariot of fire, his mantle fell on Elisha. Everyone knew that the spirit of Elijah had come upon Elisha who went on to perform twice as many miracles as Elijah had done.

In spite of this the parting words of Moses were not positive. 'I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, for you will do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking Him to anger with the works of your hands' (Deut 31: 29).

Jesus in contrast was able to say, 'It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (the Holy Spirit) will not come to you ...' (John 16: 7).

The power of reproduction is in the seed, and the seed is in the male. When the sons of God move into manifestation, they will not draw people into helpless dependence on themselves. Rather they will be able to depart like Jesus and impart their spirit to those who come after.

The Death of Moses

Like Jesus, Moses had both a special birth and a special death. We read in the last chapter of Deuteronomy that God buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-Peor; and that no one knows his burial place to this day. Jude tells us that Michael the archangel disputed with the devil over his body, and we see Moses in resurrection standing with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration.

Even before Moses died, at a hundred and twenty years old, we read that his eye was not weak, nor his strength gone. Death had a hard fight to get him, and a problem in keeping him!

Death is that last enemy that will be destroyed. Enoch and Elijah also were able to defeat it, and go direct to be with God. What does God hold in store for us? What will the overcomers overcome? I do not know, but at least I have read that **this corruptible will put on incorruption, this mortal will put on immortality. Death will be swallowed up in victory. Amen.**

Bible quotations are taken from the NIV or retranslated

baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised. But to sit on my right or on my left, this is not mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.'

Like Miriam and Aaron, James and John wanted top positions. There were two things that they did not understand.

Firstly, those who are going to reign with Jesus must first suffer with him. The 144,000 who stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion are those who 'follow the Lamb wherever he goes'. They cannot follow him to the throne unless they first follow him in his sufferings and humiliation.

When we think of the sufferings of Jesus, our minds turn naturally to his last hours on earth. When we think of suffering with him, we perhaps think of our brothers and sisters in communist and other countries who face prison and torture and other deprivations for his sake. It is right that we should think this way, and the scripture tells us, 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints' (Psalm 116: 15).

However there is a deeper aspect of his sufferings. His physical sufferings, as far as we know, were limited to the last 24 hours of his life. His spiritual sufferings continued throughout his 33 years on earth. 'He came to his own, but his own did not receive him' (John 1: 11). 'Consider him who endured such hostility of sinners against himself' (Heb 12: 3). Moses knew this suffering as he experienced the continued opposition, not of the heathen, but of the people of God towards him. Those called to sonship will tread a similar pathway.

Secondly, those who are going to reign with Jesus will be those whom God has chosen. Jesus said very plainly, 'to sit on my right or on my left, this is not mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.' Man naturally thinks in terms of mass production. His machines turn out hundreds and thousands of identical articles. God creates with infinite variety. No two snowflakes are even the same.

The whole of scripture teaches us that people have different callings. This truth is an affront to the natural man who wants equality for all. Masters and servants, men and women, parents and children, red and yellow, black and white must all be equal. God is the master potter who has power over the clay to make what he wishes from each lump. Our part is to walk humbly in that calling to which he calls us.

Under the old covenant God had an order. He chose one small nation of the many that inhabited the earth. From that people of Israel he chose one tribe, the Levites, for a special calling. From among them he chose some to be priests, and one among the priests to be the high priest.

In God's new order there will not be equality, but the greatest will be the servant of all.

Introduction

Moses stands out as the pre-eminent figure of the Old Testament. There were great men before him and great men after him, but for over a thousand years the closing words of Deuteronomy remained true, 'Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face...' True that is until his own prophecy was fulfilled, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brethren, you shall listen to him' (Deut 18: 15).

What was the secret of his greatness? The answer is his likeness to Jesus. No one in the old testament was more like Jesus than Moses.

The world now wants more people like Moses and like Jesus. It does not lack politicians or religious leaders or scientists. These are all plentiful, but they cannot solve its problems. It wants nothing less than sons of God. Paul expressed this truth in Romans chapter 8 verses 18 to 23. 'The anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God ... the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.' If that was true when Paul wrote it, it is a hundred times more true now.

Jesus was the firstborn Son of God. His life was a total demonstration of God. The impact of his brief three years of ministry, his life, death and resurrection is still felt today even by those who have scarcely heard his name. God never intended, however, that His life should be a one-off, never-to-be-repeated solo performance. Rather he was the first of the first fruits to God, to be followed by others like him. He was a sign pointing forward to those who were to follow. His death as the sinless Lamb of God for the sins of the whole world was of course final and unique. His life lived out in the power of the Spirit of God is not copyright, but intended to be reproduced.

Moses gives us a preview of that life. He was more like Jesus than any other in the pages of the Old Testament. As we move towards the great hour of the manifestation of the sons of God, if we are treading the pathway of sonship, we will find much in the life of Moses that matches and explains our own experience.

In this article I have selected events and features from the life of Moses, comparing each with similar or contrasting happenings in the life of Jesus. My aim is that, as we grasp their significance, we will gain a clearer understanding of what God is doing in our lives as we press forward along the same pathway.

The Birth of Moses

Several unusual births are described in the Bible. Isaac, Samson and John the Baptist, like Jesus, all had their births announced by angels. Moses was like Jesus in a different way. Tragic events unite their births across the fifteen hundred years that separated them. In each case an evil monarch decreed the mass destruction of infant children in an attempt to protect his throne. Pharaoh ordered that every male

Hebrew child should be put to death. Herod commanded that all male children under the age of two should be killed.

Revelation chapter 12 verse 4 describes a similar event. The great red dragon stands in front of the travelling woman, waiting to devour her child. Twice also in Israel's history we find parallel events. Within days of the nation's birth in the waters of the Red Sea, they faced the Amalekite hordes that would have destroyed them but for divine intervention. Three and a half millennia later the combined Arab armies attacked the newly reborn state of Israel, and again their survival was miraculous.

All these five births - the birth of Moses, the birth of Jesus, the birth of the male child in Revelation, and the birth and rebirth of Israel - teach us the same lesson. Birth - especially the birth of a male child - is something that Satan contests. On each occasion we see his rage and hatred. In each case God intervenes and the male child is snatched away to safety.

Who is this male child? Moses was its forerunner. Jesus is its head. The sons of God, now being born, and not yet manifested, who are called to share the throne with Jesus and rule the nations with a rod of iron; these sons are the body of the male child.

What about the daughters of God? Does this male child also include women? We might also ask, does the church, the bride of Christ, also include men? Does 'Babylon the Great the prostitute and the mother of prostitutes' also include men? I would give an emphatic yes to all these questions. The male in scripture symbolises the spirit and the female symbolises the flesh. People who walk according to the spirit, either men or women, are spiritually male. People who walk according to the flesh, either men or women, are spiritually female. It is this sort of woman that should cover her head and keep silent in the churches! So the sons of God are those who are spiritually male irrespective of their sex in the natural.

The birth of these sons is contested by the adversary, but their survival is sure, for what is born of God overcomes the world.

The princess took the baby Moses to the palace in Egypt and his future looked good. Again, as in the days of Joseph, there was a Hebrew in the Egyptian palace. Was Moses to be a similar saviour of his people?

His Name

We will now consider the meaning of the name Moses. The princess named him Moses (*Moshe*), saying 'Because I drew (*mashah*) him out of the water' (Exod 2: 10). The word *moshe* means *one who draws out*. In this we may see two things. Firstly he himself was drawn out of the waters of Egypt. Those waters represent things that are earthly and carnal. Moses was drawn out by God into the heavenly realm. He then became one who was able to draw others out. This is pictured in the way, against great opposition and difficulty, he drew the Israelites out of Egypt.

A Special Calling

In Numbers chapter 12 we find an interesting and instructive episode in the life of Moses. Miriam and Aaron attacked him with the words, 'Has the Lord indeed only spoken through Moses? Has he not spoken through us as well?' What they said was very plausible. Both of them had a history in God's service. Aaron had been spokesman for Moses when they stood before Pharaoh, and had subsequently been appointed high priest. Miriam is described as a prophetess when she led the women in singing and dancing (Exod 14: 20). What they said was true. God had spoken through them. But that was not enough to put them in the same category as Moses.

In verse 3 of this chapter we find the parenthesis, 'Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.' Moses, as we have seen, had had a history that had made him humble. At the age of 40 he may have been proud; at 80 he was a different man. Miriam and Aaron may well have experienced the external workings of the Holy Spirit. They had not, as their actions showed, known the deeper inward workings of God.

God then called the three of them to the tent of meeting and said to them: 'Hear now my words: if there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, shall make myself known to him in a vision. I will speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses, he is faithful in all my house; with him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of the Lord...'

We find here a clear distinction between prophets such as Miriam and Aaron, and Moses, the man of God.

To those with little understanding of the ways of God, someone who can prophesy and exercise other spiritual gifts, may appear to be a spiritual giant. However we do not need much knowledge of scripture or experience of church life to convince us that this need not be the case. King Saul prophesied among the prophets early in his life. Later he disobeyed God and was rejected. He was then troubled by an evil spirit. The widely publicised lives of various TV evangelists tell us the same story. Men can be used by God in healings and other spiritual gifts and then fall into gross sin.

Moses knew God in a way that Miriam and Aaron and other prophets did not. They might receive a word or a vision from God rather as one might receive a letter through the post. God certainly spoke through them, but God spoke to Moses directly 'face to face, just as a man speaks to his friends' (Exod 33: 11).

We must turn to a parallel new testament story. In Mark 10: 35-40, James and John said to Jesus,

'Grant that we may sit in your glory, one on your right, and one on your left.' Jesus said, 'You do not know what you are asking for. Can you drink the cup that I drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised?' They said to Him, 'We can.' Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be

He did not call the people back to the law of Moses. His words appeared to his hearers to destroy the very foundations that Moses had laid. Yet he had not come to destroy but to fulfil. I wish I could be taken back in time and be a Jew in 30 AD with a perfect knowledge of the scriptures and total ignorance of all church tradition. What would his words have meant to me? How would I have reacted?

John, in an attempt to assess the effect of his ministry, concluded his gospel with the words, 'there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written'.

Those who do not know the leading of the Holy Spirit will always be imitators. They will copy what they have seen others do. They will only be able to pass on what they have received from man. Paul states in Romans 8: 14 that 'those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God'. God is creative. The Holy Spirit is also therefore creative. Those who are led by the Spirit of God will be creative too. Their creativity will not be based on natural gifts, but on the inspiration of God. In the natural realm creativity is based on human imagination. The creativity of sonship will be the creativity of God himself.

A Delivering Ministry

We will consider one further piece of common ground between Moses, Jesus and the sons of God. They are all sent to deliver. Moses went to a people who were slaves and set them free.

In Luke's gospel Jesus began his public ministry by reading a passage from Isaiah that described his commission. Included were the briefs to 'proclaim release to the captives' and 'to set free those who are downtrodden'. In John 8: 32 he said 'You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free', and 4 verses later 'If the Son shall make you free, you will be free indeed'. In Galatians 5 Paul wrote, 'Stand firm in the liberty with which Christ has set us free, and do not be entangled again in a yoke of bondage.'

When we turn again to the great sonship passage in Romans chapter 8, we read in verse 21 that 'the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.' Freedom is of the very essence of sonship.

We should expect to see and experience the delivering power of the Spirit of God working in our own lives, setting us free. Chains and fetters of every kind, known or unknown to us, will be broken and destroyed, as he prepares us for the great deliverance of the whole creation that is to come.

Here also Moses is like yet unlike his greater successor Jesus. Jesus was from above. Moses, like us, was from below. We need to be drawn out of the waters of the flesh. Jesus did not. He came from above to draw others out and up.

The male child, of which we have already spoken, is also to be caught up to God and to his throne.

Humiliation

While Moses lived in luxury and ease in the palace, the people of God were suffering bitter affliction and hardship as they laboured for their Egyptian masters. When he was forty years old, his heart began to stir, and he wondered if he could do something to improve their lot. Perhaps his mind went back to Joseph, the great national hero who had risen from prison to save his people from famine and all Egypt with them. How much better placed was Moses with his position in the palace and full Egyptian education to use his influence to help them.

God's time had not yet come. Joseph, like Jesus, was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh and began his ministry. Moses, though ten years older, was still totally unprepared. His attempts to help his people ended in complete failure. From the palace he could do nothing. He had yet to learn the true ground of authority.

Moses, at this stage, had authority of two kinds: he had the authority of position and the authority of learning. He was a prince, and he was 'taught in all the wisdom of the Egyptians'. Many people today want to serve God on the basis of human authority. What could be better than an influential status in society and a good education and knowledge of the scriptures from which to proclaim God's word? People will listen to someone with a name and a position.

The true authority of divine sonship is totally different. Jesus had no position in the religious hierarchy of his day, but he spoke with an authority that everyone recognised. It was the authority of the Holy Spirit resting upon him. His authority was not human but divine.

Moses had to be stripped of human authority and share with Jesus the pathway of humiliation.

In Philippians 2 we find the beautiful words:

Have this attitude in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Our limited minds cannot easily grasp the extent of this descent. Surely it would have been enough for God to become man, and be confined in a human body. Jesus went much further. He was not born in magnificent Rome, nor even Jerusalem, but in little Bethlehem; not in a palace, nor a house, but in a stable. He

did not live in some great centre of learning like Athens, but in the despised provincial town of Nazareth. He had no special education or important job. He spent three quarters of his adult life as a carpenter, before his brief three years of itinerant preaching. His followers were not the promising young intelligentsia of Jerusalem, but simple people from Galilee. His career ended, as far as the world was concerned, in a criminal's death. What a pathway for the son of God!

Moses went nearer than any other in the old testament to walking the same road. He left the splendour of the Egyptian palace to visit his brethren in their affliction. He found an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and so he knocked him down and killed him. Many people try to serve God like that, in the power of the flesh. The results were disastrous. Moses was forced to go into long exile in Midian. There the only work available to him was that of a shepherd, which probably from his childhood he had been taught to despise. Genesis 46: 34 tells us that **'Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians'**.

Shepherds to us have a positive image. Their very name is a title of Jesus himself. We perhaps think of them, a bit unrealistically, with little lambs hopping around in green fields in the spring sunshine, as pictured in our children's Bibles. To the Egyptians, as in some parts of the world today, a shepherd was probably a dirty, uncultured, illiterate vagrant. Moses had become a shepherd.

In the western world there is no occupation that is generally despised and treated as outcast. In India there are castes such as sweepers that are so low that they are considered untouchable. Brahmins are at the top of the social tree. There are many others in between. Moses had left the Brahmins and joined the untouchables!

Suppose Prince Charles were to go to some distant country and take a job as a dustman ... Would that be a fair comparison?

Even that was not the whole story. **'Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law'**, we read. Yes, not his own flock, nor even his father's flock, but his wife's father's flock. This was the man who had been a prince in Egypt.

Perhaps he expressed his inward pain when he named his son *Gershom* - *'a stranger here'*. Joseph, also in exile, had triumphantly named his firstborn *Manasseh*, - *'causing to forget'*. He said, **'God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's house'** and his second, Ephraim - *'fruitfulness'* - saying **'God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.'**

Joseph's exile had led to promotion beyond the wildest imagination. The path of Moses, for the present at least, was the ultimate demotion. In time he was to rise higher even than Joseph, but first he must tread the path of the greater one whom he foreshadowed and be Gershom - *'a stranger here'*.

For forty years this humiliation continued, till all hope or even desire for something higher had gone. The pathway was painful, but not without fruit. We read later that **'Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth'** (Numbers 12: 3). In his youth he was not humble. By nature no man is, and people brought up in palaces probably less than most. The poor are more often

humble. God worked in him to remove his proud self-confidence and to produce in him the supreme characteristic of the Greater Man to come.

Many people are attracted to the power and privileges of sonship, but do not see that they must first tread the pathway of humility. Only if we suffer with Jesus will we ultimately reign with Him. Sonship is not an ego-trip. On the contrary, it is the ego's death. It presupposes that the ego has been crucified with Christ.

A Creative Ministry

We have thought about the preparation of Moses. We must now consider the ministry that followed.

Moses was a spiritual pioneer. He did not build on foundations laid by others. The task God gave him had never been done before. It was completely new, and of enormous magnitude.

Jesus was described as a **'prophet powerful in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people'** (Luke 24: 19). The same thing was true of Moses. His deeds in Egypt, when he stretched out his staff and called down plagues, were visible to all. Their impact was immediate and the whole of Egypt stood in awe of him.

His words had less immediate effect, but far more in the long-term. Firstly they laid a foundation for Israel, the people that God had chosen to be the earthly vehicle of his revelation. Subsequently the teaching God gave him has become the basic moral code for almost half the world to this day.

We can scarcely grasp the impact and significance of the life and ministry of Moses. As already quoted from Deuteronomy, **'Since then no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face'**. Moses himself had said, **'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him'** (Deut 18: 15). None came who could be compared with him till Jesus.

All the old testament saints who came after Moses were to some extent his followers. We see this most clearly in Elijah. Elijah was a great man of God, but he was essentially a restorer. His task was to call the people back to the law of Moses. The people had turned to the worship of other gods, and broken the commandments that Moses gave. Elijah challenged them to return to YHVH their God. When he executed the death sentence on the prophets of Baal, he was acting as the law of Moses prescribed.

Largely that was the work of all who followed Moses. The prophets from Isaiah to Malachi were recalling the people of Israel to the law of Moses. Malachi ends with the words, **'Remember the law of Moses my servant ...'**

The things that Jesus said and did were also new and revolutionary. Those sent to arrest him said, **'No one ever spoke like this man.'** His words and actions continually surprised his followers. They never knew what he would do or say next. He was totally creative and original.