

“The Issues We All Must Settle”

Moses is a central figure in the word of God. He, of course, was a type or picture of the Lord Jesus, and God used him at a critical time in the history of His people, to deliver them from Egyptian bondage and to set them toward the land that God had promised their father Abraham, the land of Canaan. But, Moses' life and his destiny really boiled down to one split second in time, and there are some decisions that we make in life that are just that critical and important. Moses made this decision, and it not only determined *his* destiny, but also the destiny of a nation, and in a sense, yours and mine as well. The Hebrew writer refers to this choice that we're going to study today.

Hebrews 11:23-28 “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.”

As I said, Moses' destiny really came down to this great choice that the Hebrew writer is telling us about. Moses in this split second of time had to grapple with some major issues in his heart, and they are the same issues that confront you and me. We're going to discuss four issues that we all must settle.

The life of Moses can be broken down into three distinct periods of forty years. The first forty years of his life, the formative years, were spent living as an Egyptian. Perhaps you remember the story of Moses' birth. He was born during a time when the Pharaoh was very concerned about the Hebrews multiplying. They were enslaved to Egypt, and Pharaoh was concerned that their number would become so large and powerful that they could mount a revolt and break free. He didn't want that, so he decided to have all of the baby boys born to the Hebrews executed. They were to be taken and thrown into the Nile River. But Amram and Jochebed had a little baby boy they named Moses, and the Bible says that he was a goodly child, a handsome baby. Jochebed could not bear the thought of giving her child up in death, so she hid Moses for a little while until she could hide him no longer. Then, that tender and famous scene unfolds where she takes the baby and puts him in a little homemade ark or cradle that she crafted, and takes him down amongst the reeds and the bulrushes and sets it afloat there at the edge of the Nile River. And she turns to go her way, thinking perhaps that she might never see her little boy again and wondering what would happen to little Moses.

While Jochebed went home, Moses' sister stayed behind to see what would unfold. The princess of Egypt, the Pharaoh's daughter, came down to the riverside to bathe, and something caught her eye. She saw that little ark floating there in the water and she dispatched her servants to go and get it. When they uncovered the child, Moses began to cry. That broke the heart of the princess. She fell in love with

this little baby boy and she decided that she would adopt him to be her own. And so, Moses was taken into the palace of Pharaoh to be raised as royalty and to be the grandson of the Pharaoh as it were.

Well, during those formative years, by God's providence, Jochebed—Moses' own mother—was brought to the palace to serve as a nurse to the baby Moses. Reunited with her little boy! You can be assured that in those tender, impressionable years, she was whispering in his ear, "You're not an Egyptian. You're a Hebrew. We don't worship the gods of the Egyptians here. We worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the one true and living God."

Moses grew up and those lessons that his mother had instilled in his heart never left him, because one day when he was about forty years old and had had all of the luxuries of the palace and of Egypt at his disposal, while he was destined for great power and wealth and influence as an Egyptian, he ran across an Egyptian taskmaster beating one of Moses' fellow Hebrews, a slave. Moses' temper flashed, and he rose up in righteous indignation and slew that Egyptian and he buried him there in the sand.

Well, word got out, and Moses—in that very deed—was taking his stand with God's people. In that one split second decision, Moses was denouncing his Egyptian heritage and embracing the heritage of his birth. He was embracing the God of the Hebrews. He was embracing the God of the Bible. Of course, Moses' life became endangered because of that, and he went off into exile for a period of forty years. Finally, God brought him back to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage after that period of time, and with God working in him, he set the people free and marching toward the land of Canaan.

You know, in that very moment that Moses saw that Egyptian beating the Hebrew, that moment that he decided to rise up in indignation to kill the Egyptian and thus take his stand with God's people, in that split second of time, Moses found himself at a very difficult crossroads in his life. His life could've gone in two very opposite directions. So, he faced a choice: he could remain in the palace of Pharaoh OR he could identify himself with the Hebrew people, thus serving the Lord. That may sound like an obvious decision, but the fact is, there were some major issues that had to be settled in the heart of Moses before he could truly make that choice.

So it is in the life of every person confronted with the gospel. The decision to be a child of God involves much more than just deciding to be baptized or to attend the services of the church. There are real issues that must be settled before any man or woman can really make that great decision of whether to live the Christian life. There are far too many people today who have never settled these issues in their own mind, thus they're torn between Egypt and Canaan. Moses did not have that problem because he settled the issues at hand.

The first issue Moses had to settle was who he was.

Hebrews 11:24 "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;"

Essentially, that's what Moses had known for the better part of forty years. He had grown up in the palace. He was considered the son of Pharaoh's daughter, being adopted into the palace and into her

family. Yet, when he comes to this critical point in life, he refuses to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He made a great choice and he settled the issue at this point in time, of who he was.

You know, Abraham once had to settle the same issue. The Bible pictures him as a sojourner who was ultimately looking for a city "*whose builder and maker is God*" (**Hebrews 11:10**).

You recall that Joseph faced the same issue. He was raised in Egypt but he belonged in Canaan. Recall that at the end of his life, when he was old and near death, he gave instructions for his bones not to be left in Egypt, but carried back to Canaan with the Hebrews. Why? Because although he had spent all of that time in Egypt, in spite of all of the privileges and turns of event that had happened in his life, he knew who he was. He knew to whom he belonged and what his heritage was, what his legacy was. He didn't want to be buried in Egypt. He wanted to be buried with God's people.

Well, similarly, Moses was a man living in a foreign land who never forgot who he was and where he was really from. There are many who like to wear the name 'Christian.' They like to claim that their citizenship is in heaven; that is, they like to say that they're going to heaven one day, but they don't live much like their citizenship is in heaven. They refuse to sever the relationships of earth. Remember that Jesus said unless I hate father and mother, brother and sister that I cannot be His disciple (**Luke 14:26**). That doesn't mean that I despise them in the sense that we think of hating people; what it means is that unless we come to understand that our relationship with God supersedes any other relationship, we can't follow the Lord.

II Corinthians 6:17-18 "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

You see, we're *in* the world, but we're not *of* it, and every person has to settle the issue of who he/she is because you cannot be the friend of the world and the friend of God at the same time (**James 4:4, Luke 16:13**). If you claim the name 'Christian,' do you remember who you are when you're thrust into the middle of a worldly crowd? Do you remember who you are when you're tempted to go places or do things or say things that are unholy? Do you remember who you are when you go to the closet to dress in the morning? Do you remember who you are when you're alone among unbelievers and faith and righteousness are taunted and ridiculed? Have you settled that issue like Moses did?

There's another issue, and that is the issue of life's great reward.

Hebrews 11:25-26 "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

You know, to the worldly minded, Moses' choice looked foolish and fanatical. Look at what Moses gave up! He gave up the power of a prince, the treasure of a very wealthy nation, the pleasures of living in a palace. At the time, Egypt was one of the great monarchies of the world. Her coffers were full of treasure. Moses could've had his hands on it ALL, but the golden dust of the nation and the crowns and

diadems of the royal court did not corrupt his soul. Instead, Moses chose the rags of poverty. He chose the hard toil of slavery, the ill treatment of God's people. The above passage tells us that Moses did this because "*he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*" In other words, he considered what each life would really pay in the long run.

That's one of the problems we have in this life, in exercising wisdom: we tend to look at the here and now. We look at what we think of as the short-term benefit instead of looking at the long-lasting and especially eternal ramifications of the choice that's before us. You know, sometimes a job or a business deal or a real estate decision looks good at the time, but it isn't such a good deal later on. There are a lot of people who buy into a lot of things in life, in their spiritual lives, that look good, but they will find out that it was NOT a good investment. So it is with our lives.

You know, first of all, in making this great determination about the rewards of life, Moses had to realize the cost of sin. He was very wise in that he understood that the pleasures that came along with Egypt and thus, the pleasures of sin, were only for a season. Mark this down: sin always promises one thing and delivers another. That's the age-old deception of sin and it's still as effective as it ever was. Think about it: what does sin do for a person? It might give you a good time for a few minutes or a few hours or a few days, but ultimately what does sin do for a person? It robs you of your health and happiness. David cheated with another man's wife and conceived a child with Bathsheba, then murdered her husband in order to cover it all up. It didn't take very long for David to come to regret that night of sin. Read **Psalm 6** and you'll see just how grieved and overwhelmed with remorse that David was, as a result of his sin.

Sin also makes promises that it won't keep. Sin promised the prodigal son a life of freedom, autonomy and pleasure off in the far country. But what did it do? It left him in rags, feeding hogs, so hungry he could nearly die. Sin destroys your greatest possession and it leaves you with nothing.

Matthew 16:26 "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Are you throwing away the things that are really valuable in exchange for the things that will only bring disappointment and will one day turn to rust? You see, Moses settled that issue.

Moses also weighed the cost of serving God. Not only does it say that he realized the pleasures of sin were for a season, it says that Moses chose to suffer affliction. By rejecting the robes of royalty, Moses was choosing the sorrow of slavery, years of difficulty. Some live under the illusion that Christianity is easy when it is anything but. The Christian life requires sacrifice, consecration, dedication and self-denial. Yet, Moses saw that as "*greater riches.*" Moses is forgotten in Egypt. Think about it. There's no sphinx carved in his image because he chose a different course. He may have been scorned in Egypt, but he's honored in heaven. And when the great sphinx and pyramids of Egypt have crumbled to dust, men will still remember the faith of Moses. Moses settled the issue of *life's great reward*.

Thirdly, Moses had to settle the issue of *whom he feared*.

Hebrews 11:27 “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”

He did not fear the wrath of the king. That’s saying something. You know, Pharaoh was a proud, fierce and hardened man as we come to see. He wasn’t about to relinquish his hold on the Hebrew people and allow them to leave. Moses knew that his relationship with the government of Egypt would instantly change, and that he would go from being the darling prince to becoming public enemy #1.

Now, I have news for you. If you’re a Christian, and I mean an all-out Christian, the world is NOT going to like the way you live. The world is not going to like what you say. In fact, the world is going to revile you for what you believe. We might have been a little spoiled, especially in the United States, for these past generations because we’ve lived in a culture where it was generally thought of as acceptable for a person to believe the Bible, to profess Christianity. But that is quickly changing in this culture in which we live. I can tell you, as it stands right now, if you truly live for the Lord Jesus Christ, the world is going to come down on you like a hammer.

II Timothy 3:12 “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

John 15:18-20 “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you...”

Jesus went on to say that they do it because they don’t know God. Friend, we’re living in a decisive age where the lines are clearly drawn. So the question is: do you fear the wrath of the world, or wrath of God? You’re going to have to make a decision where that is concerned. When you form convictions about moral, social and religious issues today, the question is, whom do you fear? You can’t fear both, and you can’t love both. Like Moses, you have to settle the issue of *whom you fear* and thus, whom you are going to follow.

Finally, Moses settled the issue of *faithfulness*.

Hebrews 11:28 “Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.”

He endured, the Bible says. He went on to keep the Passover faithfully. It required *faith* to follow God’s instructions. Surely it was a frightening prediction that the angel of death would sweep through their land that night as Moses was told would happen. But Moses believed God. How strange to sprinkle blood on a door, but nonetheless Moses believed God, and he followed the Lord’s instruction. Does such describe *your* commitment and your fidelity to God? Have you settled those issues in your own heart and with the Lord? Have you determined to leave Egypt behind and head toward Canaan and not turn back?

Now, the people who Moses led were fickle. The people who Moses led grumbled and complained, especially when times got hard, and there were times when they pined for Egypt and the slavery even of Egypt! Can you believe it?! They wanted to go back! Not Moses. Moses didn't say, "Well, I'm going to lead them out and we'll go a little ways and see how it goes. We can always return." No. Moses, when he made that decision that day, was setting his eyes on the prize and he was making a decision that he would be faithful and he would endure.

Perhaps you stand at a critical crossroads today: the decision between Jesus and heaven, or rejecting Jesus and eternal loss. That choice is yours to make, but it's a choice that you **MUST** make. It's an issue that you must settle. If you're ready to repent of your sins, having believed in Jesus, you're ready to confess that faith in Jesus and let somebody baptize you in water for the remission of your sins so the Lord can save you and add you to His church.