

Moses (3)
Exodus 2:16-23

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** And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. **18** And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How *is it that* ye are come so soon to day? **19** And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew *water* enough for us, and watered the flock. **20** And he said unto his daughters, And where *is he?* why *is it that* ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. **21** And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. **22** And she bare *him* a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died:...

OUTLINE

- (1) On the Ark (v1-8)**
- (2) In the Palace (v9-14)**
- (3) On the Run (v15)**
- (4) In the Wilderness (v16-22)**
- (5) Bondage in Egypt (v23a)**

Continued...

(4) In the Wilderness (v16-22)

These verses marked the next 40 years of Moses' life. A life very much in obscurity. God hid him in the backside of the desert to mould him to be God's man for the exodus.

Joseph lived in the obscurity of prison before God raised him to be Egypt's prime minister.

The first 30 years of Jesus' life was lived in obscurity. Little was mentioned of Christ's life before he began the 3 ½ years of public ministry that led to His crucifixion. The gospels recorded mainly the time of Christ's public ministry.

The Apostle Paul testified after he was called by Christ on the road to Damascus that he retreated into Arabia for three years to prepare himself to fulfil the call of Christ recorded in Galatians 1:15-17

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

George Peters aptly observed the need to cultivate faith through the work of the Holy Spirit, "taking time, discipline, patience, much humble waiting in the presence of God, an abiding in Christ and an absorbing interest in the Word of God." He further cited the example of Paul:

It is no surprise that Paul spent three years in Arabia soon after his conversion, and somewhat later, five to seven years in Tarsus. He needed time and solitude for

theological orientation, biblical solidification, as well as spiritual maturation before he became the greatest missionary of the Christian era.

John Sung testified of his call and commission to preach the gospel recalling the night of Feb 10th, 1927 in an interview, “That night of nights, Feb 10th, 1927, was the birth of new life in me after forty days of wilderness struggle. I shall never forget. The same night I received our Lord’s commission to go into all the world to be His end-time witness. The Lord changed my name to John that I should be a forerunner to Him in this age, like John the Baptist in His first coming. The Lord is coming very soon. He needs heralds before His return. Our Lord’s Second Coming is different from his First Coming. He requires many forerunners, not one, today. We are to preach, “The Lord is at hand. Christ is coming very soon.”¹ John Sung’s God appointed seminary was 193 days in Room 415 of a Mental Hospital.² That was his period of obscurity.

For Moses, it was 40 years. “A time of quiet and solitude”, Leon J Wood observed, “much in contrast to the bustling court activity of Egypt.”

Exodus 2:15 *Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.*

The well is a social centre. In the dry desert, the well was the place for physical replenishment and rest with ready supply of water.

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.*

It is interesting to observed the Midianites were descendants of Abraham with his wife Keturah, whom he married after the death of Sarah.

Genesis 25:1-4 *Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and **Midian**, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the **sons of Midian**; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoah, and Abida, and Eldaah. **All these were the children of Keturah.***

17 *And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. **18** And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to day? **19** And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. **20** And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread.*

Moses rescued the daughters of the priest of Midian, Reuel, who were harassed by shepherds at the well.

Matthew Henry insightfully said, “Moses here gains a settlement in Midian, just as his father Jacob had gained one in Syria, Genesis 29:2. And both these instances should encourage us to trust Providence, and to follow it. Events that seem inconsiderable, and purely accidental, after wards appear to have been designed by the wisdom of God for

¹ Timothy Tow, John Sung My Teacher, (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1985), 73.

² *Ibid.*, 75.

very good purposes, and of great consequence to his people. A casual transient occurrence has sometimes occasioned the greatest and happiest turns of a man's life.”

Jacob found his uncle Laban where he settled down. Over the period of 20 years, Jacob worked hard in obscurity for his father-in-law tending sheep and God raised for him a family.

Moses, too, will settle down to become a family man whilst in the wilderness. It seemed that he has reached a dead end in life when he had to fled from Pharaoh out of Egypt to the desert. As we said earlier, the desert is a picture of barrenness and death. Ironically, here Moses found life and peace and a family to care for and settled down.

God led him to learn the basic responsibility of caring for his own family – wife and children before he could care for the nation of families that God is gradually creating. He learned the responsibilities associated to marriage and parenthood. This provided the man with spiritual maturity. He was immersed in the responsibility of family life. He understood what will be the needs of the families of Israel because he reared a family of his own. He understood the responsibilities and the challenges. When he led Israel out of Egypt, there was only the beginning of his role as a leader who has to care for the many families in Israel. He has to show them the will of God that He is making a nation out of the families of Israel.

As a family man, he learned first to provide for his own - **1 Timothy 5:8** *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

Moses learned faith as he became a husband to Zipporah, his wife and a father to his children. How could he lead a nation when he cannot first lead his own family!

1 Timothy 3:1-7 *This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; **One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)** Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

20 *And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. 21* *And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. 22* *And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.*

Recall at our church camp last year, we discussed and sought biblical perspectives concerning the pertinent questions why we are who we are:

Why did God create the human race with a family system?

Why do we have a heavenly Father?

Why did God give us children?

Why is the husband and wife union a type of our relationship to Christ?

Psalm 127:1-2 *A Song of degrees for Solomon. Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in*

vain. 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

Verse 1 gives two conditions according to fact. In truth, if God is not in your building equation of family life and national life, it is going to be a disappointing futile effort!

The house is a symbolic representation of the individual homes that make up the city or the nation. The family is the basic building block of human society. Israel is a nation created by God to enact God's plan for His creation. Israel is a nation raised by God to be a testimony to all the nations of the world by her individual families.

Moses had to learn that when God allowed him to rear his own family. He understood the responsibility of marriage and parenthood.

The psalm 127 was written by David to his son Solomon is the father's instruction to the son to let God build the home and the nation according to His blueprint if it is to be truly blessed of God. In the final equation, it is all that matters.

The father and son relationship between David and Solomon is picture of the Father-son relationship we shall have for eternity in heaven.

To understand this relationship in eternity, our earthly life is the training ground. The purpose and mind of God may not be fully understood by the created being.

There is an earthly shadow and there is a heavenly significance.

(1) Family Relationship between Father and Son is the relationship we have with the Father in eternity. Why did we have a heavenly Father?

- a. **Existence** – The word “father” means “the source and originator of”. When you call someone “father”, you are acknowledging that you are from him - “I am from you” (Father). Father means “bring about you, come about by”. He is the father of so and so. Called Father means you are from Him. First function of the father is creating you. You cannot come about until you are produced.

Concept is that we receive our existence from the Father in heaven. Earthly father is a shadow of the heavenly Father. Without the earthly father, you do not have a body. Without a heavenly Father, we do not have spiritual life. From the earthly father, we know that we cannot come about without someone producing us. Similarly, we can understand that without God, we do not have a soul.

- b. **Likeness** - You have a **likeness** to the Father – we are made in the image of God. Like father, like son! A son's character or behaviour can be expected to resemble that of his father.

- i. We reflect the attributes or character of God.

- c. **Nourishing and Grooming** - Subsequent function of the father is care and nurture, nourish, educating, typify our heavenly Father maturing us spiritually.

(2) Marriage relationship is a portrayal of the relationship between Christ and the church which we cannot comprehend. God instituted it on earth so that we can understand. Why are we called the body of Christ? Eve is from the body of Adam from the very beginning. Why did Eve come from the body Adam and God did not create Eve from the soil? They are from one body and they will be one body again. Why is Eve not from the earth?

- a. They will become one body because they were from one body.
- b. together, explains the union.
- c. Why among all the relationship husband and wife take priority?
- d. Reason because of the union, it is the most united union. So, if this relationship breaks, it will be most damaging. We are of one body!
- e. Explain togetherness – marriage is for life because of the “cleave together”, inside there is the unseen emotion and bonding. Modern concept of marriage is for pure enjoyment.
- f. This union comes with commitment. And the commitment so that we will not break it!
- g. Why union is only for one body? Monogamy and not polygamy. That union is unique. Cannot cleave together with multiple party!
- h. In the eyes of lovers there cannot tolerate not a grain of sand!
- i. I cannot allow your love to share with another party. It is undivided love.
- j. Because there is this cleave together.
- k. Why is breakup so painful? Because husband and wife do not understand this cleave together.

Israel was called the church in the wilderness. This was the congregation of God’s people in the wilderness in which God delivered unto them His laws.

Acts 7:37-39 *This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,*

Leon J. Wood observed well, “Moses’ area of work seems to have been near the Gulf of Aqaba and Mount Sinai, the very region through which he would lead Israel not many years hence. No doubt geographical information gained aided significantly in the later day.”

One pastor puts it well, “The time Moses spent in the wilderness was for self-discovery.

To learn that:

- God is his self-worth and sustenance.
- God is his significance and security.
- God is the source of his supply and also his schedule.
- God is his satisfaction and sufficiency.

He went through the course of the sanity of life as a shepherd. God began to speak to his heart and in the quiet of his life. Very often in our busyness, we cannot listen to what God is saying to us. In the desert, God began to instruct him and we have been reminded

that God brought the people of God into the desert so that He may humble them and then God will test them to see whether they still trust in God or not.

So, Moses was brought into that place to learn to trust God then, as we shall see in Exodus 3, God would call him after 80 years.

We go through those times in the flesh and then we go through those times in the desert and got flash us out and that what is called “Extruded”.

God somehow or other exhaust out and presses into a mould as the potters use their hands to form and press out and make us vessels well His use and so after 80 years.”

(5) Bondage in Egypt

23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died:...

A historical perspective is needful here.

Pharaoh's daughter, Leon J. Wood observed, “may have been the renowned Hatshepsut, who in time came to declare herself supreme ruler in Egypt. For a woman to assume such a position in that day was most unusual, but Hatshepsut was a most unusual person. She had strong personality and remarkable gift for leadership, which she used in advantageous circumstances to claim the throne.³

She proclaimed herself ruler of both Lower and Upper Egypt and took a special king's name, Kamare, as well as normal royal titles.

Hatshepsut was the only living child of Thutmose I and his chief wife, Ahmose. Four children had been born: two sons (Wadnose and Amenose) and two daughters (Hatshepsut and Nefruibity). It is all but certain, however, that three of these died early in life, leaving Hatshepsut as the only one of the four who could be identified as the daughter of Pharaoh who found Moses.

Because she was not male, Hatshepsut could not accede to the throne directly. A son of Thutmose I by a lesser wife was now married to Hatshepsut, so that her legal title might work in his behalf. He took the name Thutmose II (B.C. 1514-1504). This man was weak both in body and personality, quite in contrast to the robust Hatshepsut; and he was dominated in his rule by her and the queen-mother, Ahmose, also a woman of strength. One daughter only, Nefrure, was born to Thutmose II and Hatshepsut, and so once again a son of the Pharaoh by a lesser wife was brought forward as successor. He, too, may have been married to the daughter, royal in blood from both parents, though no certain evidence has been found in this instance.

This successor assumed the name Thutmose III (B.C. 1504-1450). It was when Thutmose II had died and this young Thutmose III was about ten years of age that Hatshepsut took the daring step of assuming full control of the kingdom. Thutmose III clearly had been crowned before she did so and reigned perhaps a year. But then she seized his crown; and it was not until her death twenty-two years later (B.C. 1503-1482), following a most impressive reign, that he was finally able to take the headship back again. That he harboured great bitterness toward her as a result is witnessed by his

³ [Two prior queens in Egypt's history had assumed supreme headship, but neither had posed and dressed as a man as did Hatshepsut. {Gardner, *Egypt of the Pharaoh* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 183}]

multiple defacements of her name and representation from monuments and temples. [For instance at Hatshepsut's great funerary complex at Deir el Bahri, though the buildings were spared, the names and figures of Hatshepsut were methodically obliterated wherever found. This involved destruction of much relief sculpture and more than two hundred statues and sphinxes which adorned the courts and colonades.]

He clearly wished to obliterate her memory from the minds of the people. This same man went on to become the greatest ruler Egypt ever knew.

We may picture Moses, if he was reared by this remarkable woman, in the palace at Thebes as her adopted son. Thebes was a city of splendour at the time and offered the finest in cultural benefits. Being the center of Amun worship, great religious buildings abounded and educational advantages were the best the world afforded.

Hatshepsut, intellectually endowed herself, would not have been satisfied with anything less than the finest education for her son. Her own daughter Nefertiti, died while still little more than a child, which left Moses to receive all Hatshepsut's attention. He would have been provided the finest in tutors, and his own mental capacity would have been able to absorb all that was taught. That he did profit greatly was verified years later by Stephen saying, "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22)."⁴

Leon J Wood recounted the time in Egypt when Moses was in the wilderness giving us a picture of the deceased king that ruled Egypt, "Most of Moses' forty-year period in the desert had elapsed when finally, the great Thutmose III died (Exodus 2:23-25).⁵ By this time, the mighty king had ruled thirty-two years since his return to full control. These had been years of great accomplishment. He excelled as a statesman and administrator, and he was one of the accomplished horsemen, archers, and all-round athletes of his day. He was a patron of the arts.

But it was as a military strategist that he distinguished himself. Immediately upon Hatshepsut's death, he was faced with a major revolt by northern Palestine and Syria. This he put down decisively with a brilliant victory at Megiddo. In later campaigns, he pushed Egypt's northern border once more beyond the Euphrates, even farther than his grandfather had. Then two quick campaigns south along the Nile fixed this boundary as far as Napata below the Fourth Cataract.

Egypt's borders were now brought to their maximum limits, a true empire. Gold, silver, and valuable merchandise of all kinds poured into the land, both in the form of seized booty and products of trade. Egypt flourished as seldom in her history. But finally, the great ruler died, and Moses was able to return to Egypt."

⁴ Leon J. Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1986, 93-95.

⁵ Leon J. Wood, *A Survey of Israel's History*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1986, 96.