



## Moses

For the first 40 years of his life, Moses was well-known, brilliant, talented, and well liked. He became a believer at age 39 and had a bit of spiritual growth and one big decision. His era of obscurity began at age 40.

Moses began his service to the Lord with a murder at age 40. This was his zeal to correct a wrong without knowledge. This failure caused him to have to escape to the wilderness where he lived in obscurity for another 40 years.

He began his second area of service to the Lord with objections to God's instruction at age 80. He falsely claimed inadequacy to God. He said, "Who am I, I don't have a message, I'm not an authority, I'm not eloquent, Lord send someone else." He tried to get out of it. He wanted to go back to his tending of sheep.

Moses also began his second area of service to the Lord with the breakup of his home. Moses had to learn that you operate on the basis of grace in the spiritual life, not on who and what you are!

### Moses' Great Decision

The Book of Exodus does not give Moses' great decision, but it can be found in Hebrews 11. Hebrews 11 records what happened immediately after his great decision. Moses was still a new believer and had to learn that one victory does not mean that everything is going to be smooth sailing.

Moses was in fellowship when he made his great decision. Immediately after that he failed. He started out by killing an Egyptian, afraid and then he fled, but he did not stay out of fellowship, he confessed his sins to God the Father quickly.

In Exodus 2:11, "When Moses was grown" and refers to his actual age of 40 years. We know he was an adult from Acts 7:23. Now he has already made his decision, he has already identified himself with them. He saw one of the taskmasters abusing one of the Jews.

*"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." (Exodus 2:11, NASB)*

*"But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel." (Acts 7:23, NASB)*

### The First Failure of Moses

Moses was a very powerful man and thought he could liberate the Jews through the act of killing one man, but of course, this was not God's plan to get the job done. Exodus 2:12.

*"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." (Exodus 2:12, NASB)*

In Exodus 2:13, he went out the next day to observe and found two Hebrews (Jews) having an argument. He immediately made the right decision through discernment. He was a very brilliant man and addresses the one doing wrong. However, the man who was wronged had something to say. Immediately, Moses decided correctly that if one person saw earlier his act of murder, many would know of it.

*"He went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the*



*offender, "Why are you striking your companion?" (Exodus 2:13, NASB)*

In Exodus 2:14, "Moses was afraid" means that at this point there is no faith-rest thinking. He was out of fellowship. He had forgotten to claim God's promises.

*"But he said, "Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and said, "Surely the matter has become known." (Exodus 2:14, NASB)*

In Exodus 2:15 and Acts 7:24-29, Moses realized that he must leave quickly.

*"When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well." (Exodus 2:15, NASB)*

*"And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian. And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. On the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, 'Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?' But the one who was injuring his neighbor pushed him away, saying, 'WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND JUDGE OVER US? YOU DO NOT MEAN TO KILL ME AS YOU KILLED THE EGYPTIAN YESTERDAY, DO YOU?' At this remark, MOSES FLED AND BECAME AN ALIEN IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN, where he became the father of two sons." (Acts 7:24-29, NASB)*

He also recovered quickly from his fear by confessing his sin to God the Father. Heb. 11:24-27.

*"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen." (Hebrews 11:24-27, NASB)*

Moses had the failure of human ability. God honored Moses' decision, but God did not honor Moses' human ability. Moses made the decision by faith so he was in fellowship and God was glorified. He didn't make the decision according to human viewpoint or ability. Only God is glorified by our faith. The deliverance of Israel was going to be by grace, not legalism.

In this case, since Moses was a physically strong man, he tried to deliver them by the arm of the flesh, his own physical strength. But God will not use this method. He will use His own divine power. Moses was strong, but not strong enough to deliver the house of Israel. Moses was brilliant, but not smart enough to deliver the house of Israel. Moses allowed the energy of the flesh to get in the way as believers often do.

Moses had the failure of human impulse and emotion. The first time he saw a Jew being persecuted he got mad, lost his temper, and committed murder. In slaying the Egyptian, he acted on impulse and on emotion. No believer can act on these and please the Lord and serve Him. Instead of using Bible doctrine and resulting divine viewpoint, Moses used impulse and emotion. Obviously he was spinning his wheels. Killing that Egyptian didn't accomplish a thing.

Human violence offers no solutions to the problems of life, not even temporary solutions. This does not refer to warfare. Warfare is the means ordained by God to maintain the balance of power between the nations and between national entities. Warfare has a legitimate function. Crime doesn't solve anything.



Assassination doesn't solve anything. In fact, they just make things worse. See category on [War](#).

Problems that someone thinks can only be solved by killings are never solved. Man's problems are solved by regeneration not reformation. You can't improve the world by getting rid of the weaker people like Hitler tried to do. Regeneration is permanent and eternal. Impulse, pity, emotions are wrong motives for Christian service. Service to the Lord must be based on God's power, Bible doctrine in the right lobe of your soul, and on His provision of grace. Unfortunately, today many sincere and confused believers operate mainly on their emotions.

It took Moses 40 years to learn to serve God in God's way and not his way. You can't be led into missionary service through pitiful stories. Moses' timing was wrong. He was 40 years ahead of God's timing. He was not prepared for service in God's plan. When God gets ready to deliver Israel, it will not be by killing just one, but every first born in the families of Egypt.

The iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. It will take 40 more years for them to reach the saturation point. That generation was not ready to go, it would be the next generation that would be ready to go. Don't get ahead of the timing of God.

Serving God in a leadership capacity is absolutely useless without preparation. The greatest thing needed today among pastor-teachers is preparation! The vast majority of pastor-teachers and Christian ministers in America today are not prepared for the pastorate, for evangelism, for the mission field, or for anything.

The average person in the pastorate today is not prepared and if he stayed 50 years he still would not be prepared. He doesn't even have the tools to dig out the basics in the original languages which is absolutely 100% necessary.

God uses prepared believers. That is why you must be constantly taking in the Word. You must be preparing yourself, which includes knowledge of Bible doctrine, orientation to grace, and spiritual growth. Human mechanics (such as killing an Egyptian) are no substitute for divine good production which is always from the filling of the Holy Spirit. The believer must learn to be a transmitter of God's grace, never claiming to be the source of it.

### **Moses in Midian**

In Exodus 2:16, Moses was by a well in Midian and back in fellowship. He was occupied with the Lord. "The priest of Midian" was Reuel and was an important person among the Midianites and apparently had no sons. That meant that his daughters and wife had to do the work. He was apparently busy with his priesthood functions. His daughters had to keep the sheep and draw their water from a well.

*"Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock." (Exodus 2:16, NASB)*

In Exodus 2:17, when they were doing this, some rival shepherds came and drove them away and being ladies they could not fight back. Moses just happened to be there and sees this great injustice. The last time he tried to correct another injustice, he failed using his physical strength because he was out of fellowship. He helped the ladies who were watering their flocks, but what he actually did was whip the shepherds by himself.

*"Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock." (Exodus 2:17, NASB)*

In Exodus 2:18, Reuel was the father of the ladies who Moses had just helped out. Reuel was also called



Jethro in Exodus 3:1 which was his priestly title. The girls report back to their father and had mistook Moses for an Egyptian because of his clothing. They reported that this man drove the shepherd off with his strength. He “delivered us” and he got water for the sheep also.

*“When they came to Reuel their father, he said, “Why have you come back so soon today?”” (Exodus 2:18, 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 3:1, NASB)*

In Exodus 2:20, Reuel asks his daughters of the whereabouts of this man and tells them they had been very inhospitable by not inviting him for some refreshment and rest. Moses stayed with Jethro, married Zipporah and had a boy named Gershom which means banished to a strange land. He thought that he would only be in Midian temporarily. It turned out to be 40 years. Exodus 2:20-22

*“He said to his daughters, “Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat.” Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses. Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.”” (Exodus 2:20-22, NASB)*

He knew that someday, he would go back and God would use him to deliver the children of Israel. He knew that God will be the Deliverer, but that he will be the instrument in God’s hands. He had already learned a great deal.

### **Moses Goes Five Rounds with God at the Burning Bush**

Moses’ life can be divided into three 40-year periods. The first 40 years included 39 years of unbelief with one year of salvation. The second 40 years were spent in Midian (Arabia) in obscurity. For the third 40 year period, he spent leading Israel.

It was time for Moses to go to work. He had been prepared. Moses knew what he was to do for 40 years, but he had to prepare in obscurity. Moses then goes five rounds with God at the burning bush.

#### Round 1: Who am I?

In Round 1, Moses’ first objection is “Who am I?” Moses was not grace oriented. He had illusions about himself. What were His illusions? He had the illusion of false humility, “I really can’t do it Lord.” He had an illusion about his own capabilities. He thought he would perform God’s will on the basis of human ability. He had an illusion about the wisdom of God and thought God had made a mistake. Moses was questioning the wisdom of God. Moses was not oriented to the essence of God. Exodus 3:11.

*“But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?”” (Exodus 3:11, NASB)*

Moses did not understand who and what God is. God is all knowing. Moses did not have an edification complex in his soul at this moment that was functioning. He had the *gnosis* doctrine in his left lobe, but he had not yet exercised faith belief in that Bible doctrine. It was not yet usable for application. God promised His personal presence with Moses. How much does this mean to you? Exodus 3:12.

*“And He said, “Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain.”” (Exodus 3:12, NASB)*

#### Round 2: I don’t have a message.



Moses' second objection was; "I don't have a message and I can't go to those Jews without a message." Moses first asked God what name should he use for God when speaking to Israel on His behalf in Exodus 3:13.

*"Then Moses said to God, 'Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?'" (Exodus 3:13, NASB)*

Forty years of training and Moses didn't have a message. Forty years of daily Bible class and he didn't know anything! God answered him two-fold in Exodus 3:14-15.

*"God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations." (Exodus 3:14-15, NASB)*

The essence of God is mentioned first with the name "I am who I am." This means God has always had perfect existence. You start with the essence of God. His character first. By application to you today, could you present the essence of God right now if someone wanted to know? Understanding God's essence is fundamental to the spiritual life!

It was important that the Jews understand that deliverance from Egypt depended upon who and what God is not who and what they were. The Jews were helpless in slavery and God will deliver them in grace. God says, "I am powerful and I can do something about it."

The Abrahamic Covenant is presented in Exodus 3:15-16. "The Lord, the God of your fathers" means that God protects and watches out over His own. He promised them a Land - the land of Canaan. He promised a seed and that Abraham's descendants would enjoy that Land. He promised blessing for their obedience to Him. God promised to bring them out of bondage in Egypt into the Land.

*"God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. "Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt." (Exodus 3:15-16, NASB)*

The promises of God are presented in Exodus 3:17. Now Moses had a message from God Himself. God will keep His promises to Israel. A promise is no stronger than the person who makes it. The power and truthfulness of the person making the promise makes it secure or worthless. For Moses, God had given him a message that God had made a perfect promise that was backed up by a perfect all-powerful and perfect God.

*"So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey." (Exodus 3:17, NASB)*

Dispensations or the time orientation of God is presented in Exodus 3:18-21, John 16:33, and 1 Cor. 10:13.

*"They will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt*





*and you will say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'"* (Exodus 3:18, NASB)

*"But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed."* (Exodus 3:19-21, NASB)

*"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33, NASB)

*"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."* (1 Corinthians 10:13, NASB)

### Round 3: They won't lean on me. I have no visible authority.

In Exodus 4:1-9, Moses was saying, "They won't lean on me. I have no visible authority." He was convinced that they would not believe him or listen to what he would say. Moses felt he would be a failure. He thought he had no credentials. After 80 years of living, he understood the fickleness of people. By application to believers today, you need to be convinced in your soul that Christianity is a life of faith. Today, we have no visible spiritual authority today in the realm of Christianity. We have the God-breathed written Word of God! We have the very thinking of Jesus Christ in written form! 1 Cor. 2:16.

*"For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ."* (1 Corinthians 2:16, NASB)

*"Then Moses said, 'What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'"* The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff." Then He said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. But the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail"—so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— "that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." The LORD furthermore said to him, "Now put your hand into your bosom." So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. Then He said, "Put your hand into your bosom again." So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. "If they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign. "But if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground." (Exodus 4:1-9, NASB)

God provided three signs for Moses. The first sign was to turn Moses' staff into a snake (cobra). Moses ran away in fear. The snake represented Egypt. Moses was running from Egypt in his mental attitude. But Moses followed instructions given by God. You must learn what the Bible says and be able to put it into practice. You must be able to follow God's instructions.

The second sign given to Moses by our Lord was turning his hand into a leper's hand and then returning it to normal. Moses saw the leprosy on his hand and thought it was hopeless and that he would die. This



miracle further showed Moses the power of God. God would protect him from any disease because He had control over disease. God was also telling Moses that he would take him safely through every hopeless situation in life. This is applicable to us today as well.

The third sign given to Moses by our Lord was turning water into blood. Moses was to use this miracle if the people of Israel were not convinced of the first two signs.

#### Round 4: I am not eloquent!

In Exodus 4:10, Moses says to our Lord that he is “slow of speech” implying he is also slow in thinking. He also said he was “slow of tongue” meaning he was a slow thinker. Neither was true. Moses was skating on thinner and thinner ice. These were Moses’ big lies.

*“Then Moses said to the LORD, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”“ (Exodus 4:10, NASB)*

A wonderful study of the Old Testament is the study of Moses’ speeches. They are among the most eloquent in the Bible. He was a very accomplished public speaker and had tremendous public speaking ability. Acts 7:22.

*““Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.” (Acts 7:22, NASB)*

God’s reply is found in Exodus 4:11-12.

*“The LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? “Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.”“ (Exodus 4:11-12, NASB)*

#### Round 5: Lord use someone else.

In Exodus 4:13-16, Moses received his well-deserved divine discipline for lying to our Lord resulting in Aaron becoming the spokesman for Israel, not Moses, even though Aaron was not a good public speaker. Part of the divine discipline was eternal in nature. Moses was from the tribe of Levi, out of which came the Levitical priesthood. The high-priesthood of Israel came only from the family of Aaron, not Moses. Aaron’s family would be the priesthood. Even in the Millennium, they will be a priestly family.

*“But he said, “Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever You will.” Then the anger of the LORD burned against Moses, and He said, “Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. “You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. “Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him.” (Exodus 4:13-16, NASB)*

Moses had a wife, but he never had any surviving children that led in the spiritual life of Israel. He had two sons, but his wife walked out on him and never went to Egypt with him. There was one attempt at reconciliation through Jethro, but it failed. She took the two sons of Moses and walked out of his life. Moses never saw his two sons again. Later on, he married an Ethiopian, but if they had any children, they didn’t survive.

Actually a curse was pronounced here, a discipline. Aaron’s family survived because he was willing to



do God's will. Aaron would do the talking with Moses doing the thinking. Too bad. Moses didn't want to do what the Lord asked, so he was bypassed. There was no dialogue on Aaron's part. Moses, who was one of the greatest believers of all time, had no descendants.

### **The Continued Preparation of Moses**

Don't underestimate preparation that involves the cultivation of self-discipline, concentration, and knowing the plan of God backward and forward.

In Exodus 4:16, Moses was then directly involved with Aaron in his service to the Lord. Any type of Christian service involves more than one person, even though one may be doing the speaking. There is no such thing as service for the Lord that is a one-man show. For the pastor-teacher and husbands, your wife has an effect on your preparation and spiritual growth. For the wives, your husband and your children have an effect on your spiritual growth. Those in the family have to pull together. A good example is David in 1 Samuel 22:2 where David was at the cave of Adullam. In 2 Samuel 23:8-9, he praises the "mighty men" of David. David's mighty men are also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 11:10-47.

*"Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him." (Exodus 4:16, NASB)*

*"Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him." (1 Samuel 22:2, NASB)*

*"Now these are the heads of the mighty men whom David had, who gave him strong support in his kingdom, together with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel." (1 Chronicles 11:10, NASB)*

Service for the Lord must operate on divine power, which is the enabling power of the Holy Spirit when a believer is in fellowship - filled with the Spirit. Exodus 4:17.

*"You shall take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs." (Exodus 4:17, NASB)*

Even though Moses had received his orders from God, Moses was a gentleman. He was thoughtful of others. He followed the customs of tribal courtesy. When Moses left the tribe, he was not going to leave any hard feelings. Exodus 4:18.

*"Then Moses departed and returned to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, 'Please, let me go, that I may return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see if they are still alive.' And Jethro said to Moses, 'Go in peace.'" (Exodus 4:18, NASB)*

Moses learned of the Lord's timing and His control of human history. The stage was set for Moses' return to Egypt at the death of the Pharaoh who had sought him for murder. Events just slipped into place. Exodus 4:19.

*"Now the LORD said to Moses in Midian, 'Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.'" (Exodus 4:19, NASB)*

It becomes fairly clear later on that Moses and his wife are not together on his return to Egypt. Moses had family trouble. Moses had another problem - the negative volition of Pharaoh. God does not send us into a problem blindly, but he gives an inkling of what will happen so proper preparation can be made.

What did Moses do at this point? He followed God's instructions. He had to be patient and use faith-rest. Moses had to have patience in dealing with Pharaoh. Moses would have to have even more patience





in dealing with the children of Israel in the wilderness. Very few believers have patience under pressure.

*"So Moses took his wife and his sons and mounted them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand. The LORD said to Moses, 'When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. 'Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Israel is My son, My firstborn.' (Exodus 4:20-22, NASB)*

In Exodus 4:23, God's message to Moses was to give out God's message straight from the shoulder. The phrase "Israel is My son" is used. Why? Israel was founded on regeneration. God could say that to the Pharaoh because those over 20 will be or have been born-again. "I want him to serve me" refers to a redeemed Israel who cannot serve the Lord while enslaved in Egypt. By application, the believer cannot be enslaved to the world around them and serve the Lord. You cannot have two masters. Human viewpoint was for Israel to stay in Egypt. Divine viewpoint was for the Lord to take them out of Egypt with His power.

*"So I said to you, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.'"" (Exodus 4:23, NASB)*

God's message was; "If you don't let them go, I will bring death of the nation's first born!" It took 40 years to train the leader of Israel and it took 400 years to train the people of Israel. Exodus 4:23 refers to the tenth plague, the last plague. Before Moses ever set one foot in Egypt, he had a complete set of instructions from the Lord, from the first to the tenth and how it was going to play out. Our complete set of instructions from God is only from the written Word of God.

### **Moses' Family Problem is Solved**

Moses had become a bit sloppy in his thinking. He had a fight with his wife Zipporah, which wasn't unusual in itself, but the content of the argument was. Moses had had a fight with his wife over their youngest son (Eliezer, Exodus 18). The eldest son had been circumcised according to God's instructions. Moses' unbelieving wife refused to have the younger son circumcised. So, they had a battle royal over the younger son.

You can guess who won, the wife! She got down and started screaming, beating her head against the wall or gave Moses the silent treatment, or pouting and finally the husband said, "Okay, honey, you win." But it was not an issue of what the wife says, it was an issue of what God says. So Moses had the gall to start for Egypt without having his youngest son circumcised. And under these conditions, they pull up at their first stop for the night. Here, Moses begins to die the sin unto death. 1 John 4:16.

*"We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (1 John 4:16, NASB)*

The sin that was causing the maximum divine discipline of the sin unto death was about as serious as it gets. Moses not circumcising his youngest son meant that Moses did not believe in the eternal aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. This was gross blasphemy and a gross sin. Exodus 4:24.

*"Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death." (Exodus 4:24, NASB)*

When Moses and family stop for the night, the Lord was waiting for him. Here, the Lord Jesus Christ began to extinguish Moses' life as divine discipline for Moses' sin of blasphemy. This was Moses' last chance to confess his sin and return to fellowship with the Lord. It was that serious. Moses would have



died and God would have raised up another man except for what took place.

In Exodus 4:25, we don't have all the details, but apparently Moses commanded his wife to circumcise the son because he knew he would die the sin unto death if the sin was not corrected. Moses was disobedient and was about to die. He was gasping his last and he knew what the problem was. Zipporah obeyed her husband. She didn't want to do it, but she did it. Why? Because she came from a background where it was bad luck to refuse the request of a dying man and she was superstitious. "I'll be hexed for life if I don't follow through."

*"Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, 'You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me.'" (Exodus 4:25, NASB)*

She didn't care about Moses dying. She hated him. Casting the piece of flesh at Moses' feet was a way of expressing hatred. She called him a "a bridegroom of blood" meaning that she purchased the life of her husband by shedding the blood of her son.

Zipporah used an idiom that implied that she had given birth to her son again because she was obedient. But she hated Moses, a groom she would never love. It means, "We're starting over, but you're starting alone. In other words, this marriage is over!"

In Exodus 4:26, "So He let him alone" means that Moses was delivered from death and his family was broken up. This was where the unbelievers departed. Moses would be single in this endeavor of the Lord. He couldn't operate under the circumstances where his wife was viciously against him. He would have no concentration. There are certain plans that demand the entire time of a single person. Zipporah would have been a hindrance to Moses.

*"So He let him alone. At that time she said, 'You are a bridegroom of blood'—because of the circumcision." (Exodus 4:26, NASB)*

Was Moses a great man? Even though great, he was not indispensable in the Lord's service. God can find someone else if you are out of fellowship. The Lord doesn't need you, but you need Him! If our Lord didn't constantly turn cursing to blessing, none of us could make it.

The Lord is served on the basis of His provision of grace. If Zipporah had not circumcised that boy, Moses would have been dead. Now Moses was alone and he had absolutely nothing. People are afraid to be alone because of their instability!

### **The Discussion and First Victory**

Our Lord told Aaron to go meet with Moses in the wilderness in Exodus 4:27-31.

*"Now the LORD said to Aaron, 'Go to meet Moses in the wilderness.' So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him to do. Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; and Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped." (Exodus 4:27-31, NASB)*

Aaron and Moses discuss the entire operation from beginning to end. They were encouraged by having people believe, but before long the Jews would be discouraged, hot, tired, thirsty and unreasonable. There must always be testing to grow spiritually. God permits discouragement, but grace turns cursing into blessing. This is grace in action. Lam. 3:32.



*“For if He causes grief, Then He will have compassion According to His abundant lovingkindness.”  
(Lamentations 3:32, NASB)D-*

### **Moses Lifted Up the Serpent in the Wilderness**

Much later after the Exodus into the wilderness, the first generation began to complain about God and Moses. They had become tired of God's grace provision of water and manna every day. Num. 21:5.

*“The people spoke against God and Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food.”” (Numbers 21:5, NASB)*

In Numbers 21:8-9, this involved the second wilderness generation. As discipline for Israel, the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people. They were bitten and many died.

*“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.” And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.” (Numbers 21:8-9, NASB)*

The people came to Moses, confessing their sin and requested that Moses pray for them, which he did. Moses was instructed by God to make a fiery serpent out of bronze and set it upon a pole. Fiery means forged and refers to how it was made.

The promise given was that anyone who had been bitten and simply looked upon the bronze serpent would live. This was a picture of faith belief for salvation. This promise was fulfilled. The venom of the snake represented sin. The pole represented the Cross. Christ was made sin for us.

Sin originated through negative volition with the Satan-indwelt serpent in the Garden. Moses made a serpent of bronze representing judgment. The serpent on the pole was symbolic of salvation through Jesus Christ on the Cross. He bore our sins in His body on the Cross and endured the judgment for those sins on our behalf. Christ was judged in our place is His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross. 1 Peter 2:24; John 3:14-15.

*“and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” (1 Peter 2:24, NASB)*

*““As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.” (John 3:14-15, NASB)*