

A Biblical Case Study of the Leadership of Moses

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Starting with Exodus 2, the reader is introduced to a young man who was a Levi, which is a part of a tribe called the Levites, bore a child with a woman during a time of Pharaoh's reign. Pharaoh was evil and heartless during this period as a king. The woman hid the child for first the first three months and after she could no longer hide and protect him, carried the child away in a basket down the river to spare his life not knowing his fate. "So, Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive." (Exodus 1:20, NKJV). However, as the story proceeds, the child's sister spies from afar to discover what will happen to her little brother. Meanwhile, in another part of the area Pharaoh's daughter takes a bath in the water as the baby in the basket so happens to be drifting nearby. She hears the child and directs for the slave to fetch the crying baby.

When the daughter of Pharaoh notices the child is a Hebrew and not Egyptian as herself, she was shocked but longed to help the baby regardless. "And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So, she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." (Exodus 2:6). However, the child's sister who saw what happened to her brother, asked the daughter of Pharaoh, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you" (Exodus 2:7). The daughter obliged and the sister cleverly goes to get the actual mother of the child to nurse the baby. As the narrative continues, the mother unbeknownst to Pharaoh daughter was paid to nurse the child until he grew. When the child grew older, he became Pharaoh's daughter son. "And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So, she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water" (Exodus 2:10).

Once Moses became a man, he was still a Hebrew by heart although he lived among the Egyptians. Because the Hebrews were enslaved unto the Egyptians, he understood that he was in a place of privilege although his brethren were not. One day an Egyptian was beating a Hebrew man, and Moses secretly killed the man when no one was looking. Later, he discovers he was not as conspicuous about his actions as he thought. During an argument, an argument between two Hebrew slaves Moses intervened to make peace. “Then he said, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian (Exodus 2:14)? From this point forward, Moses became a fleeing man. For Pharaoh was now aware of his deeds and sought to kill him.

The narrative moves forward to a time of his escape from his homeland, then progresses into another land where he met his wife and her sisters after protecting and helping them from shepherds who intended to drive them away from feeding their flock. When the father, a Midian priest heard of this, he insisted Moses stay with him, and he offered his daughter to him as a wife. “Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses” (Exodus 2:21). Shortly after the king of Egypt died and the Israelites were still in bondage and groaned to the Lord. The Lord heard them and remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. “And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them” (Exodus 2:25).

Now, God had a plan to rescue his people, and Moses was the person he chose to execute this plan. Unfortunately, Moses did not see himself as a leader or worthy of success in high regard. One day the Lord came to Moses in a burning bush and told him of his plan to lead the people out of Egypt. Moses complained, made excuses and directly told the Lord he was not the man for this task. “But Moses said to God, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I

should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 3:11)? God encouraged Moses by stating he would be with him and guide him through. Moses challenged further and stated and who shall I say sent me. “And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Exodus 3:14). With much coaxing Moses, agreed. The Lord proved his power repeatedly with Moses when he gave him authority to change a rod to a snake, turned his hand from leprosy back to normal and caused water to turn to blood (Exodus 4:6-9). Moses along with his brother Aaron helped set the Israelites free from Pharaoh’s imprisonment on behalf of God’s command.

The reader is now presented with a period where after all God had done for Moses to convince the people to follow him, they still were ungrateful and complaining. Regardless of how many miracles and prayers God answered the people always murmured and complained. “So, Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord” (Exodus 17:2)? The people did not see their journey as a blessing, rather more of a curse. They won, wars, they were feed and given water. Plus, Moses told to obey and follow directions, and consistently they failed the test. Moses, as the leader, became weary and tired of their antics.

During their travel, Moses saw his father-in-law again the Midian Priest and told him all that the Lord had done. He also confessed of how burdened he was with his people. “And Moses said to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws (Exodus 18:15). Moses father in law teaches Moses how to direct the people to God and not be the middle man any further. He instructs him to teach the people God’s laws and rid the weights off his shoulder. “And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do” (Exodus 18:20).

Moses listens, continues his journey and brings the people to Mount Sinai to meet the Lord. The Lord was going to speak to the people and let them know if they obey and follow his commands, they will be a chosen people, and God will fight for them. The reader is now presented with a scene of how the Lord would come down in a cloud of smoke. However, only Moses and Aaron, his brother would be able to climb to the top of the mountain. The Lord said, “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine” (Exodus 19:5). Moses did as he was instructed. He told the people what to do, sanctified the people and warned them not to disobey their orders regarding the Lord speaking to them.

Then the Lord said to him,

“Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you.

But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, lest He break out against them.”

So, Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

Now, that Moses has conquered the task of leading the Israelites through a plethora of trials and tribulations, will they be able to sustain their love for God and their leader? Moses was capable of being a leader under the guidance of God. However, his challenges brought many areas to light which aided in the mighty works of the Lord.

Questions

1. Do you think Moses was the right leader for this calling due to his sins and lack of faith?
2. Was Moses an effective leader throughout his journey when leading the Israelites?

3. What areas did Moses fail as a leader as well as succeed?