

Moses

Part 1

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[00:00:01] I would like to ask you to turn to the Book of Acts, the seventh chapter of Acts. This, of course, that we are reading from is the speech of Stephen just prior to his martyrdom.

I want to read from verse 17. But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months.

When he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. [00:01:04] And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian.

For he supposed that his brethren would have understood how that God, by his hand, would deliver them. But they understood not.

Further down the chapter, verse 35. This Moses, whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? The same did God send, to be the ruler and a deliverer, by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, [00:02:03] 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 spoke to him in the Mount Sinai. With our fathers, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us. To whom our fathers would not obey, but trust him from them. And in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us dogs to go before us, for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, be what not what is become of him. Now could I also add to that a few verses from the epistle to the Hebrews, in the third chapter. The first verse, Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, [00:03:03] consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all

his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house. For every house is built by some man, but he that built all things is God. Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after, of Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end. Anyone who attempts to speak about Moses finds, if he didn't know before he started, that he has a good-sized problem on his hands. [00:04:04] This problem is not greatly reduced by the fact that only one side of the scriptural teaching about which centers around this man of Moses has to be dealt with.

The problems consist mostly in the total volume of the material which is relevant, and the need for thinking rather carefully as to what is more important than other things to concentrate on and to deal with in order to present a simple and coherent account of the typical teaching which can be gained by thinking about this man, Moses.

Our earlier pairs of speakers on all three earlier evenings have found all that basic biblical material in the one book, the book of Genesis. But as soon as we think about Moses, [00:05:02] admittedly we can find nothing about him in Genesis, though I suppose we must bear in mind that he was the author of that book as well. Turn over the page into the book of Exodus and we can carry on for four books at least, the remainder of the Pentateuch, and we can find material there over which we can range and over which we have to decide what is the more essential kind of thing to talk about.

We have felt the need of a good deal of seeking for wisdom as to how to deal with this problem.

As compensation for that, one is thankful to find verses here in both of these passages that I have read to you that make it extremely plain that this is a valid thing to try to do.

We read in the seventh of Acts how that Stephen reminded them that Moses himself had said that someone else greater than he was yet to come, [00:06:02] the prophet, shall the Lord your God raise up like unto me, him shall ye hear.

You couldn't wish for a more straightforward verse to confirm that it's right to look at Moses and to see there more than just Moses, but to see there that one who is greater than Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Not only do we find that one verse that confirms this, but we find another verse in that third chapter of Hebrews that says Christ Jesus was faithful, even as faithful to him that appointed him, even as Moses was faithful.

That tells us that not only in what he did, but also in the way in which he did it. Moses is an example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Moses is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now it seems to me that these verses that I've read to you [00:07:02] not only give us the authorization for trying to do this kind of thing, to look at Moses and to see Christ, but they also give us some lines on which we can proceed.

And the lines on which I do wish to proceed are to say a little about the birth and the early years of

Moses, to see there a few things which remind us of Christ, to say a little about the attitudes of others to Moses, and to see there the attitudes of others to Christ too, and then to spend the most of the time I expect on what Moses actually did, the functions which he performed, and how there is a reflection there of all that Christ did.

And then finally at the end I would like just to say a little about the spirit of Moses, [00:08:01] which in some of the instances particularly is such a reflection of the spirit of Christ himself.

Look at what Moses did, how he showed his attitude to the people on some of those occasions, and see there more than just he, to see the attitude of our Lord Jesus Christ himself.

You would note on the first verse that I read, it said the time of the promise drew nigh, and then a verse or two down it says in which time Moses was born.

And the first thing I want to say about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is this, that it was time, that it came at the right time. His arrival into this world was according to schedule so to speak.

The time of the promise drew nigh it says here, [00:09:02] and at that time the Deliverer was born, grew up and was there for the moment when he was needed.

When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that they might become, receive the adoption of sons.

Christ came in due time.

Here we have a suggestion of it in this verse.

Not only was it correctly timed, but it was very opportune that Moses should be there to relieve these people who were feeling the brunt [00:10:01] of Pharaoh's enmity against God.

The slavery and the opposition from Pharaoh was reaching its limit and God had seen it and he had his man ready.

And need we say that the greater than Moses, when he came, he came at the opportune moment and there was a great need, a crying need for his coming. And he came in time and to achieve that which God intended to relieve those who were under the bondage and those that were in the power that they could never have relieved themselves from apart from his coming.

In the early stages it was unnoticed his arrival. Moses was born there. [00:11:01] No one knew what he was destined to be and to become.

It all happened undercover, so to speak, for many a year. This man was growing up and being prepared. No one knew.

God had his man, God had his man being prepared and God brought him out at the right moment and sent him to the end that he was to achieve.

There is that providential element, too, in the survival of Moses as a child, which I suppose we can

see to have a fairly close parallel with the same kind of thing which happened when Christ came into this world. A cruel edict was in force when Moses arrived, was born into this world. The enemy of God was at work.

And Moses escaped it.

[00:12:01] A lot of misery was being caused, but the target of that enmity was not touched. It wasn't at the precise moment of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ that this happened, of course, but after one who was more precisely his enemy and his enemy alone. It was after him and him alone was seeking to have him dead, but he escaped it. Providentially, he went away down into Egypt and there he escaped the wrath of the enmity of his adversary.

His birth then and his early years remind us of Christ.

Then shall I say something briefly about his reception. [00:13:01] He wasn't recognized, Moses.

An enemy was there that was against him.

Those that should have known better, too, did not recognize him.

He was in the world, it says, of the Lord Jesus Christ and the world was made by him and knew him not. Then what is perhaps almost worse, it says, he came unto his own and his own received him not. Here we read of Moses approaching his own people and yet not recognized.

And this is the whole point of this speech of Stephen's. He's repeating time and again throughout the story of the children of Israel, instances of their unawareness of God's approach to them, their unawareness of God's intervention for their good and for their blessing. Joseph was dealt with evilly by their fathers.

[00:14:05] We had it mentioned last night. Moses, too, he thought they would have understood that God by his hand was going to deliver them, but it says they understood not. Stephen goes on accumulating the evidence against them and he says the worst thing of all has happened, that the greatest one that God could send has been here. You have put him out and you have refused him. He challenges them with this. The Lord Jesus Christ was not recognized. And we see this in type and in shadow, suggested to us, anyway, in the story.

Of Moses.

Delay in their recognition of him.

He presented himself to them the first time and they wouldn't help him. And he went away to the backside of the desert. [00:15:01] Second time he was received, of course.

It's a continual story throughout the scriptural account of the life of Moses. This, that his own people were not entirely on his side.

They refused him. They wouldn't have him when he first presented himself to them.

Later, they would not obey him. To whom our fathers would not obey, it says. But in their hearts turned back unto Egypt. It was hardening on Pharaoh's part, but there was a good deal of unbelief and a good deal of unawareness as to who he was.

The privilege of their position of being led by this wonderful man on the part of his own people.

He came unto his own, the Lord Jesus Christ did, [00:16:01] and his own refused him not.

That isn't the whole story, of course. He came with a mighty mission to achieve, and I want to spend a little time talking about those functions which Moses achieved and which are so suggestive of those functions which Moses fulfilled and which are so suggestive of what Christ has done.

A little difficult to put this into a coherent whole, but I would like to suggest to you that we see Moses as the one who was God's agent, so to speak.

God's sent one, God's envoy, shall we say. The one whom God sent and the one who worked for God in his day with his people.

Sent by and acting for God.

I have seen, God said, the affliction of my people [00:17:02] and I will send thee.

And you know, over and over again, do we not read of the Lord Jesus Christ as the one whom God sent and he is indeed, in this sense, greater far than Moses and yet we see a picture of him in this man, Moses.

Consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, the writer to the Hebrews says, and you know that word apostle means one who has been sent and the parallel is drawn there between Moses and between the Lord Jesus Christ himself. God sent him.

Last of all, he sent his son. The scripture says that Moses was God's apostle. I suppose it doesn't have to be demonstrated. He was, of course, also his people's most effective intercessor [00:18:02] and that's the other side, the apostle and high priest of our confession. We are concentrating just for the moment on the fact that God sent him and God sent that greater one than Moses in due time.

He was sent to be a deliverer, does it not say here?

This Moses whom they refused, saying who made thee a ruler and a judge, the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer. He refused him as was the thing that God sent him to be, according to that verse. God sent him to be a ruler and a deliverer. I would suggest the word leader could be included there because it says in the next verse he brought them out and we think about the Lord Jesus Christ as the greater deliverer of his people, the greater ruler of his people, the greater leader of his people [00:19:02] than Moses was.

That deliverance was needed and if it was needed in Egypt how much more it was needed in this world into which the Lord Jesus Christ came.

That need was noted and the oppression, the oppression which the oppressor meted out to those

people was fully sensed by God and in due time it reached its limit and in due time the deliverer was sent.

The intervention when it came, though there was a good deal of patience and a good deal of waiting for the appropriate moment, it was effective and it was complete. The enemy of the people of God in Moses' day was routed, his grip was broken in a most patent way with a high hand God delivered them out of Egypt and they saw their enemies dead [00:20:02] upon the seashore. What a wonderful story that is but what a more wonderful story is the answer to it in what Christ has done. God has waited long but God has intervened in Christ. God has sent his well-beloved son and his intervention though he has met with unbelief and though he has met with opposition and though he has met with unawareness and ignorance of what he is nonetheless he has achieved all that he set about to do and all that God intended should be done and that mighty deliverance has been effected in Christ and we can rejoice in all that he has done in the way of a deliverer and we can well wish to follow him as our leader and ruler more so than the children of Israel to follow Moses as their leader and ruler perhaps. He broke them out [00:21:01] what a mighty exodus it was out of the land of Egypt they were committed to him from that moment onwards our fathers doesn't it say in the Corinthians were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea he was their leader they were committed to him obedience what was right with him was what was right and what was expected and what was risky to avoid too it was expected it was a serious thing to challenge the leadership of Moses as more than one incident in the remaining story will tell us they were committed to him we are committed to the one who has brought us out and the one after whom we follow who is our lord [00:22:01] and deliverer he was also not only the deliverer but he was the spokesman for God much might be said about this time is slipping by God's word and God's message was made clear through Moses that he sent the Lord and though it wasn't taken notice of and though it only hardened Pharaoh's heart was God's word and it ended in Pharaoh's destruction to harden himself against that word of God through Moses in that day how many times did Moses speak to the children of Israel and give them guidance on their journey what a wonderful speaking that was that God brought about when he himself took place at the mount of Sinai when God revealed himself in all his law [00:23:02] in all his lofty standards his character that was made plain by through Moses in that day it had its limitations it had its shortcomings it was short the shortcomings of this in essence were connected with the other partner in the bargain so to speak it was a bipartite arrangement God said if you do this I will do that God said thou shalt do this but the other party had no strength to do what was required it was a wonderful revelation of God but it brought little comfort to those that received it you know as a greater speaking has taken place through the Lord Jesus Christ [00:24:02] God who spoke in times past and spoke in certain ways wonderful ways has spoken in this last day in Christ in his son and that is perfect and that is complete and that has made up for the deficiencies he will do this he says and he has done it the Lord Jesus Christ is the mediator of a better covenant it says than the first covenant if the first had been perfect there would have been no need for the second it had its limits Christ has brought in something which is better something which is complete something which is final the Lord Jesus Christ the other wasn't lowered in any way of course all God's standards were maintained the Lord Jesus Christ [00:25:01] fulfilled that law up to the hill and he was the end towards which it looked he has rounded it off so to speak and completed that mighty speaking from God God has spoken by speaking not only about what Moses did but about the way in which he did it and the spirit of Christ is so plainly there in this man Moses in more than one place but particularly in some places and it says in Hebrews here for instance he was faithful even as Moses was faithful in all his house the faithfulness to him that appointed him and that I am sure is one of the things that we can [00:26:01] see very plainly when we look at the story of Moses he failed as we have been reminded but once perhaps earlier on occasions there were small imperfections but the general impression that one gets

as one looks at that life of Moses is its consistency and its faithfulness to God over long years and it reminds us of that one who was faithful in a greater way than Moses was as that passage that I have read to you seems to underline there is a parallel drawn but there is also a contrast drawn in those verses Christ not merely as a servant but a son over his own house greater he than Moses though the parallel is made plain there and it is suggested that we should look at Moses and see how faithful he was and see beyond Moses to look at the faithfulness and the devotion of the Lord Jesus Christ [00:27:01] himself he was faithful to him that appointed him but he was faithful to his own people and he had a lot to put up with from them but his patience and his concern for them and his interest in them all along the years despite many provocations and despite many occasions when he might well have been exasperated what faithfulness and what consistency and what steadiness showed itself in the life of Moses and need we say to look at Christ we say this in perfect fashion the imperfections are not there when we look at Christ the small imperfections though they are completely missing not a flaw not a shortcoming a shortcoming in that wonderful life of Christ he was like Moses but he was greater than Moses in this too faithful to him that appointed him faithful to those that were under his care and you know [00:28:01] I think to round off I ought to refer just to that one incident which is in some ways one of the most moving incidents in the story of Moses where Moses is in the mount with God and the people as we've already told were transgressing so shamefully down there at the foot of the mountain God's wrath is kindled against them