

## Article of the Month – April 2014

### Moses – A Great Sent One

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The book of Exodus<sup>1</sup> tells of the Israelites, enslaved by Egyptian oppressors, on their way out of Egypt. God liberated them with mighty signs and wonders. This story spoke to oppressed people throughout the ages, but was also abused: violence was seen as a means to find liberation, but Moses's life belies this interpretation.

Persecution leads to growth,<sup>2</sup> personally, collectively, qualitatively and quantitatively. It was true for the Israelites and it is for today's Church: we see magnificent church growth in countries like China and Sudan. As surely as God liberated His people from Egypt, so He does for His oppressed people today. It may take longer than we would like but He will do justice His way and in His time, by-passing violent Moseses, who take up weapons. He acts in the spirit of Jesus, Who came to save, not to destroy.<sup>3</sup>

Egypt's slavery is an image of the world, subjugated to devil and demons, who are always ready to steal, kill and destroy.<sup>4</sup> Moses, Israel's savior, was born in the midst of his people, like Jesus, the world's Savior, was born among His people. An attempt on Moses' life was made as happened to Jesus, when Herod killed the children of Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt with Jesus, where they lived as foreigners, just like Moses fled to Midian where he sojourned as foreigner.<sup>5</sup>

God heard the cry of His oppressed people and acted upon it, but by human standards it took a long time. The delay was because the Amorites' measure of unrighteousness was not yet full.<sup>6</sup> God's late judgment was an act of mercy towards the Gentiles, *for which His people had to suffer*. This is hard to understand, but Paul sheds light on it by saying that he filled up in his flesh what still lacked in Christ's afflictions.<sup>7</sup> It is a biblical given, that *no salvation will be obtained without someone suffering for it*.

Eighty years before Israel's delivery God prepared the way by having Moses born. He was the chosen sent one, which he may have learned by revelation. At first he used violence and murder, but had to learn that this is not God's way. Zechariah said later: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord'.<sup>8</sup> This spiritual law rejects violent liberation movements and a liberation-theology that preaches this. Liberation for Israel might have come forty years earlier, had Moses not blown it. The shortest way to salvation is to let God have His way instead of 'working justice' yourself.

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<sup>1</sup> From two Greek words (*εξοδος*): 'ex' (= out of) and 'hodos' (= way, or road): i.e. the way out

<sup>2</sup> Ex. 1:12

<sup>3</sup> Luke 9:51-56

<sup>4</sup> John 10:10

<sup>5</sup> Compare Ex. 2:15 with Matt. 2:13-18 and Jer. 31:15; Ex. 2:22

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 15:16; Dan. 11:36

<sup>7</sup> Col. 1:24

<sup>8</sup> Zech. 4:6

Moses learned patience tending sheep. Through that humiliation<sup>9</sup> he became ‘the meekest man on earth’.<sup>10</sup> Some things we only learn through suffering, which was even true for Jesus.<sup>11</sup> Only by virtue of Godly character could Moses later lead two million people for forty years through the desert, most of whom rebelled and complained.

When God called Moses he tended the flock. This teaches us *firstly*, that no idler is called to God’s work. He called leaders from their professions, like Joseph, Saul, David and Elisha. *Secondly*, God trains people according to the way in which they should go.<sup>12</sup> Moses, used to bleating sheep, qualified to lead murmuring Israelites. He knew the desert and so could be their guide. Leaders who meet God in their desert of suffering and humiliation, qualify to lead their followers through similar deserts as examples of faith and trust in God. After Moses’ desert years he must have lost his ideals, drive and vision. He had unlearned to trust in his own capacities, of which he was so confident before.

God used a burning bush that was not consumed by fire to draw Moses’ attention. As if He wanted to say: ‘Moses, this is how you were aflame once for My people. *You* think your fuel is spent, but I show you here, that for a long time still you will burn with My passion without being consumed’. Moses, the reluctant ‘who am I’ needed to meet the Great I AM before his mission could start. The words ‘go’ and ‘I am with you’ remind us of Jesus’ words.<sup>13</sup> So, Moses became the major sent one for the Exodus, in spite of his arguments for God to send someone else. God added Aaron, promising to help both of them speak, just like Jesus later sent His disciples two by two. He too, promised to help them speak.<sup>14</sup>

Then God wanted to kill Moses. Why would He prepare someone for so long, and then just prior to his mission want to kill him? Had it been the devil we would understand; *he* wanted Israel to stay in Egypt and would have loved to kill Moses. But the outcome suggests differently. After Moses’ wife circumcised their son, God left Moses alive.<sup>15</sup> He had to bring his family life in order before he could do God’s work. He could not *preach* God’s covenant<sup>16</sup> without *practicing* it. Whoever broke God’s covenant by *not* being circumcised would be cut off from His people. This would have happened, had Zipporah not intervened. Even if we are called and trained, and received power and authority, but do *not* practice what we preach, He *won’t* use us!

In Mark we see another parallel to Moses’ mission. He was to speak and perform miracles.<sup>17</sup> God adds deeds to His Word, as does Jesus, sending *us*.<sup>18</sup>

The prophet like Moses,<sup>19</sup> whom God would raise up, is Jesus. Moses needed forty *years* in the desert before he could liberate the Israelites. Jesus went through forty *days* of temptation, prayer and fasting in the desert, before He delivered His people from Satan’s power.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Gen. 46:34b

<sup>10</sup> Numb. 12:3

<sup>11</sup> Heb. 5:8

<sup>12</sup> Prov. 22:6

<sup>13</sup> Compare Ex. 3:10,12 & 4:12 with Matt. 28:19,20

<sup>14</sup> Ex. 4:13; Luke 21:15; John 14:26

<sup>15</sup> Ex. 4:24,26

<sup>16</sup> Gen. 17:7-14

<sup>17</sup> Ex. 4:28; Mark 16:15,17,18

<sup>18</sup> John 14:12; 20:21

<sup>19</sup> Deut. 18:15,18; Acts 3:22; 7:37

<sup>20</sup> Matt. 4:1-11