

MOSES

*Typical Mediator
of the Old Covenant*

**BERNARD
WOUDENBERG**



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A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Rev. Bernard Woudenberg was a minister in the Protestant Reformed Churches of America (PRCA) and served in several pastorates during his forty-year ministry: Creston PRC (Grand Rapids, Michigan); Edgerton PRC (Edgerton, Minnesota); Lynden PRC (Lynden, Washington); and Kalamazoo PRC (Kalamazoo, Michigan) where he retired.

In God's providence Rev. Woudenberg was not able to see the publication of this book; on November 17, 2020, he passed away at the age of eighty-nine, twelve days after the death of his wife, Frances, Rev. Woudenberg's companion of sixty-seven years.

Rev. Woudenberg loved the study of dogmatics, so much so that he sat through Rev. Herman Hoeksema's dogmatics course three times—as an undergraduate at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan; while he attended the Protestant Reformed seminary; and during his first pastorate at Creston PRC.

But one of Rev. Woudenberg's greatest loves was Old Testament history. When Rev. George Ophoff, professor of Old Testament history in the Protestant Reformed seminary, suffered a stroke in 1958, Rev. Woudenberg took over his Old Testament history class, Rev. Woudenberg only having graduated from the seminary two years earlier.

It was also in 1958 that Rev. Woudenberg became the first contributor to the rubric "Cloud of Witnesses" in the *Standard Bearer* magazine. Over the next thirteen years, Rev. Woudenberg would write more than 200 articles under this rubric, many of which covered the life of Moses and became the subject matter of this book.

With *Moses*, we desire to introduce readers to a Protestant Reformed writer with whom they may not be familiar, and to make

accessible a book on the timeless subject of the true Mediator. Moses was a typical mediator of the old covenant and Rev. Woudenberg offers a fascinating account of his life. Rev. Woudenberg begins with the Lord's preservation of an infant Moses from drowning in the River Nile and covers the history through to Moses' final ascent to the top of Pisgah as a one hundred twenty-year-old man. And although Rev. Woudenberg at times uses poetic license to convey thoughts and actions of characters in this history, we are convinced that this book will benefit all readers.

When we as the New Testament church hear the words of God's law as the children of Israel heard them at Mount Sinai, we too become the humbled people who are unable to stand in the presence of their God:

It was a humbled people that came to Moses that night and said, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Ex. 20:19). Suddenly they had come to realize that they were in need of a mediator. By themselves they could never stand in the presence of this just and mighty God. They needed one to take their place and bring their cause into the presence of God. As never before, they began to see Moses as their savior, the one who could bring their cause to God, a figure and a type of the promised Redeemer, Jesus Christ.¹

1 From chapter 22, "God Speaks at Sinai," page 136.

Chapter 1

SATAN DECLARES WAR AGAINST THE CHURCH

13. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;
14. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. (Genesis 15:13–14)

8. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.
9. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we:
10. Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.
11. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. (Exodus 1:8–11)

The book of Exodus opens amid the roaring flames that heated the brick kilns of Egypt. Blood, mixed with tears and sweat, tinted the new mortar under the cruel lashes of the taskmasters. Slowly the walls of Pithom and Raamses rose from the desert floor, troves for the treasures of Egypt (Ex. 1:11). They were made by the groans and anguished cries of a people sorely oppressed. This was the work of slaves, and the slaves were the children of Israel, the members of God’s chosen nation. We look on in amazement, and we ask, “Why?” Why such grievous affliction? Why was it even necessary for Israel to be in Egypt?

To this latter question, Joseph already had given an answer. He had told his brothers, “And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance” (Gen. 45:7). There was at that time a famine, ordained by God, covering the face of the earth. God had sent Joseph beforehand to make preparations by putting in storage of the bounties of Egypt. Thus many thousands of people were being saved from death; and thus also the children of Israel were brought to abide under the care of their brother amid the plenty of Egypt. But yet, this answer by itself does not satisfy us. Surely God could have made some other provisions for Israel whereby she might have stayed in Canaan. The food could have been sent to them by camel; or, at least, they could have returned to Canaan as soon as the famine was over. It was evidently the will of the Lord that Israel should remain in Egypt for an extended stay. This much was implied when God spoke to Jacob on the way, “Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation” (46:3).

A deeper reason for Israel’s extended sojourn in Egypt we may find by examining the preceding history of Jacob’s children. For many years already they had been associating with and intermingling with the Canaanitish peoples of the land. The result was that they were falling deeper and deeper into sin. Witness the massacre of Shechem, and the sins of Judah with Tamar, to say nothing of the countless iniquities that Joseph as a boy had faithfully reported to his father. The distinctiveness of the family of Israel as a people dedicated unto God was swiftly disappearing. Given a generation or two more among the wicked inhabitants of Canaan, it would have been completely gone. It was necessary for the survival of Israel as a distinctive nation that she should be removed to a portion of the earth where she could dwell alone, until such a time as the Canaanitish people had filled their cup of iniquity and could be destroyed. For this the land of Goshen in Egypt was suited, and God provided that they might dwell there. In a sense it was a chastisement for their sins and a banishment from the promised land; but at the same time

it was a deliverance from the countless temptations that they were not yet strong enough to bear.

But there was also another reason why Israel was sent into Egypt. Perhaps it was the most important reason of all. Already many years before, God had made it known unto Abraham. “Know of a surety,” he said to Abraham, “that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance” (Gen. 15:13–14). God was planning to deliver his people out of bondage. He would reveal himself as Jehovah, the God who is ever faithful to his promises, by judging the oppressors of his people, by delivering his people with many miraculous wonders out of the power of their enemies, by feeding them with bread from heaven in the wilderness, by giving to them the revelation of his commandments, and generally by making them partakers of many glorious, typical blessings. God was planning to reveal his gospel more clearly than ever before through many marvelous demonstrations of his grace and power. For this the scene was being set when God sent his people into Egypt.

For a time, even after the death of Joseph, the life of the children of Israel was peaceful and quiet. Joseph’s work and influence had been very great. The Egyptians continued to show their appreciation for what he had done in their attitude toward his family. True, the Egyptians did not seek to associate with the Israelites, for they were shepherds, and the Egyptians considered that a disgrace. But the children of Israel were left unmolested to dwell amid the fertility of Goshen. Their sheep were well fed, and they had opportunity to learn about farming and many other trades from the highly civilized Egyptians. They prospered, and the Lord multiplied their number so that they became very great.

This very ease of life, however, eventually became for them a temptation in itself. The children of Israel became attached to the land of Egypt. Life was pleasant, and they enjoyed Egypt’s rare and delicious foods, its fish, its cucumbers and melons, its garlic

and leeks. Seldom did they think anymore of the promised land of Canaan as something to be desired. They had little longing to return. Joseph's coffin was still with them, but its testimony they neglected. In effect, they disdained the covenant promises of God because of their love for the fleshpots of Egypt.

But God looked down from heaven and saw the complacency of his people. He also knew what should be the cure. He set on the throne of Egypt a new king "which knew not Joseph" (Ex. 1:8). It was not that this king did not know about Joseph, who he was and what he had done. Joseph's renown was too great to be forgotten even after several hundred years. But this king did not care. He felt no real appreciation for Joseph and no obligation to his heirs. He looked upon the Israelites as aliens, intruders in his land. He hated them and determined that they should be enslaved. He had been given over unto a reprobate mind by God.

The new Pharaoh called together his people and counseled them thus: "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land" (Ex. 1:9–10). With these words we gain an insight into the character of Pharaoh. He was a man of extreme jealousy. This gave rise to endless confusion and contradiction within him. On the one hand, he was extremely envious of the prosperity of the Israelites. They had evidently become much stronger than the Egyptians themselves were. This Pharaoh could not bear. It touched his national pride. But, on the other hand, Pharaoh also realized how much the prosperity of Israel contributed to the well-being of Egypt. The Israelites were strong and willing workers. Should they choose to leave the land it would be an irreplaceable loss. Basically, however, Pharaoh was motivated by a hatred for Israel's God. It was well known in Egypt that Israel's strength was due to the greatness of their God. The driving ambition of Pharaoh's heart was to prove that he could dominate over Israel and her God. In his wicked ambition, Pharaoh became a fool.

The folly of Pharaoh soon became evident in his plan of action. He set taskmasters over the Israelites to afflict them, forcing them to work for the Egyptians. Had Pharaoh been a wise and discerning man, he would never have followed this course. He would have seen that, as long as the Israelites were left in peace, they were losing all desire to leave the land. They were a quiet and submissive people who readily obeyed the proper authorities. Moreover, while working willingly, they were contributing much more to the Egyptian economy than they ever would under force. But God's goal was the opposite of Pharaoh's, and, as always, he used the folly of the wicked to bring it to pass. Under the oppression of the Egyptians, the children of Israel began to look once again at the promise received through their fathers that they would be delivered from this land. Their earthly prosperity being threatened, they looked more and more to the deeper covenant joy that they had in the presence of their God. God used Pharaoh to bring his chosen people unto a gradual transformation of life. In this way they were blessed and grew stronger than ever before.

The more Pharaoh saw his goal receding, the more he became determined in his folly. The Israelites had been assigned the task of building Pithom and Raamses, treasure cities for Egypt. In this work the Egyptians pressed them harder and harder. The lives of the children of Israel became bitter under the rigor of their bondage. They labored from morning till evening under the burdens of brick and mortar and in the most menial tasks of the field. But it only served to thwart the plans of Pharaoh and to realize the will of God, for Israel grew and multiplied as never before.

Finally, Pharaoh became desperate. The glory of Egypt was dimming before the growing strength of Israel. Drastic measures had to be taken. He issued an order that seemed certain to cut short the growing strength of Israel. He summoned the two women, Shiphrah and Puah, who were in charge of the Hebrew midwives, and ordered them to slay all of the male children at birth. The plot was meant to be a secret one. All of the midwives of Israel were to be commanded to watch carefully when attending a birth to note immediately whether

the child was male or female. If it were a female child, she might be allowed to live; but if it were a male child, he was to be stifled before the parents even knew whether he lived. In this way the strength of the Hebrews would be curtailed, while the women would remain to perform the work. Supposedly these measures would be stopped as soon as the strength of Israel was sufficiently reduced.

What Pharaoh failed to consider was the faith of the Hebrew midwives. They believed in God and would not willingly take part in the destruction of his people. Moreover, the Hebrew women were strong and healthy, usually requiring very little assistance in delivery. When summoned to a home, the midwives merely lingered on the way until after the child was born. Once the parents knew that the child lived, it was no longer required that the child be slain.

It was not long before Pharaoh learned that his command was not having effect. In a fit of anger, he summoned Shiphrah and Puah and accused them, “Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive?” The women answered, “Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them” (Ex. 1:18–19).

The wickedness of Pharaoh would not be stemmed. Casting all pretense of secrecy aside, he issued this inhuman command to the Israelites: “Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive” (Ex. 1:22). It was Satan declaring open war against the church.

Israel’s life in Egypt had become very bitter. She labored in bondage, with persecution and pain. Not only did her people suffer, but the lives of their children and of their nation were being threatened. But behind it was the will of their God: “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Heb. 12:6). He was turning the hearts of Israel back to him again. Once again the children of Israel looked upon the coffin of Joseph and with joy remembered its testimony of faith: “God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence” (Gen. 50:25).

Chapter 2

PRESERVATION OF MOSES

1. And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.
2. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.
3. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. (Exodus 2:1–3)

Toil and tears had become the lot of the Israelites in Egypt. For many years it had been different. They had reaped the bounties of the land, and under the blessings of their God had prospered. But now a new Pharaoh had arisen who was determined to break the power of Israel's God. First there was the extra toil in brick and mortar and menial labor of the fields. More and more the taskmasters of Egypt bore down upon them, intent on breaking their strength; but Jehovah held them up, and the nation grew the more. Next there was the command that all of the male children should be stifled at birth, but against it the faith of the midwives prevailed. Finally, the command went out to all the land that the baby sons of the Hebrews should be cast into the river. Pharaoh and the God of Israel were engaged in open combat.

“And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi” (Ex. 2:1). It is a homely tale. In another setting it might appear peaceful and serene; but the place was darkened Egypt, and the time was that of Pharaoh's implacable hatred. What did such

a marriage have to offer? Only days of exhausting labor, nights of trembling, and bitter tears. Still, for simple Amram and Jochebed there was hope and promise. It was not that they thought the luxuries of Egypt could somehow compensate for the sorrows, as was true with only too many of their nation. It was not that they believed that there would be found some goodness in Pharaoh that would cancel out his wickedness. Amram and Jochebed had the hope and promise of faith. They believed in God and in the promises that he had given unto their father Abraham, to be a God unto him and unto his seed after him through all generations. They waited for the deliverance that was sure to come.

The birth of a first child to Amram and Jochebed was an occasion of great joy. Although the oppression of Pharaoh was already severe, it had not yet reached into the intimate circle of the home. In their homes the Israelites still had opportunity to find joy and peace. The child was a girl, and they named her Miriam, “the beloved one.” But time went on and the wickedness of Pharaoh began to cut closer and closer. It became evident that he was intent on destroying the nation and had designs to cut off all of the male seed. Jochebed conceived again and bore a son, but now the joy of birth was gone. There was no assurance that the child’s life could be spared, and they named him Aaron, meaning “uncertainty.” Yet, perhaps through the faithfulness of the midwives, the child was kept alive. Spurred on by his lack of success, Pharaoh in his ragings was approaching the point of madness. Finally, he issued the command that thereafter all of the male children who were born of the Hebrews should be thrown into the River Nile. This command was not limited to the midwives or parents; it went out unconditionally through all the land. It was the duty of everyone to see that it was enforced. When Jochebed conceived again, there was little room for joy, only the silent prayers that the child in birth might be a girl. But the will of God was not so. In due time, a son was born. The situation was very dire, for the agents of Pharaoh were throughout the land. If this son would be found with them alive, the consequences would be severe. But these faithful

parents would not bow in fear before the tyranny of wicked Pharaoh. They saw, we are told, that their son was a goodly child. Now it may be, as many say, that this son was beautiful to look upon. But what Amram and Jochebed saw was much more than that. It was what Stephen pointed out many years later: the child was pleasing to the Lord. These believing parents recognized that their son was a covenant child of God. They could not give him over to death. No matter what the consequences might be, their faith demanded of them that they do all in their power to keep him alive.

We might be inclined to ask why God ordained that Moses should be born just then. A few years earlier, Moses' birth would have preceded this most cruel and wicked command of Pharaoh. Moreover, it appears that a few years later the law fell into disuse and became a dead law upon the books. Moses was born during the time when it was being painfully enforced. Actually, of course, it is foolish for us to question the wisdom of God. His way is always best and must be received as such by faith. It makes no essential difference whether we can understand it or not. Nonetheless, in this case the wisdom of God is evident. Pharaoh had determined to destroy the church of God, and God would expose his folly. Out of the very period of Pharaoh's most fanatical effort, God would raise the man through whom Pharaoh's might would be utterly destroyed. In fact, in the midst of his most vile efforts, Pharaoh himself would be used to prepare that one through whom these efforts would be brought to naught. God would make it clearly evident that none can withstand his will. As God, he is very great.

For a time, it appeared to Amram and Jochebed as if they would be able to keep their child safely in their own home. Careful measures were taken to prevent anyone from even knowing that the child had been born. He was kept as quiet as possible behind closed doors, and the older children were warned not to tell anyone of his presence. For about three months these efforts were successful. However, the task was becoming ever more difficult. The child's voice was becoming stronger, his growing body more active. It became apparent to the

parents that they would not be able to keep the child hidden much longer from those who passed by in the streets. Something different had to be done. If it were not, the child would soon be discovered and killed.

Burdened by her responsibility, faithful Jochebed went down to the riverbank one day and gathered a large bundle of bulrushes. These she took home, and she set to work. With painstaking care she wove the weeds into a closely knit basket. Thereupon she coated the inside of the basket with a smooth coat of pitch and slime until she was sure that it would be completely waterproof. Into this basket or ark Jochebed placed her son. Her plan was this: They would find a desolate stretch of riverbank by which people very seldom passed. Each morning, early, before anyone else was astir, they would take the little ark with the child and allow it to float on the water within one of the thick clumps of reeds that grew all along the Nile's banks. Being made from bulrushes itself, the ark would be very difficult to see. Should the child cry, it would be much less likely to be heard there in the desolate riverbank than at home close to the busy streets. Finally, each day Miriam would be sent apparently to play by the river but actually to keep a close eye on the little basket as much as possible, keeping it from being harmed. Each night the child could be returned again to the home after dark. Perhaps the location of the basket was changed from day to day to ward off all suspicion.

This action of Jochebed, we are told in Hebrews 11, arose out of faith. It was not as though the child would now be free from all threats of danger. One could imagine countless things that might easily happen. What if the current should catch the basket and carry it away; or a storm should break and fill the basket until it sank; or if, perhaps, the crocodiles of the river should discover the precious contents? These dangers were very real, but to Jochebed they were far to be preferred to the dangers represented in the Egyptians that passed every day by her door. She felt as David did after he numbered the people, that it was better to "fall into the hand of the Lord"

(1 Chron. 21:13). Realizing that she could protect her child no longer, she placed him in the care of the Lord.

How long this plan was successfully followed, we do not know. However, one day as Miriam was sitting on the river's brink, she looked up to see a company of women approaching. Her heart skipped a beat with fear, for these women were evidently Egyptians. Moreover, from the royal dress of the one it was apparent that she was from the court of Pharaoh, evidently the king's daughter. She was coming to the river to bathe. Quickly Miriam withdrew herself so as not to draw attention to the place where the ark was afloat in the reeds. If the child would fall into the hands of these hated Egyptians, surely it would be the end. But alas, the quick eyes of Pharaoh's daughter were not to be deceived, not even by the clever camouflage of the bulrushes. She sent one of her maidens to fetch the basket and looked within.

Trembling with fear Miriam watched, expecting any moment to see her young brother thrown heartlessly into the river. She wondered within herself what she should do. The child was crying, and Miriam was quick to note that on the face of the Egyptian women there were not sneers but smiles, not anger but sympathy. She heard the words of Pharaoh's daughter, "This is one of the Hebrews' children" (Ex. 2:6), and there was kindness in her voice. Miriam caught the implication: the child was to be kept alive. Quick of wit, Miriam approached the woman and said, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" (v. 7). Suddenly the possibility appeared that the child could be restored to their home, safe from all threat of death.

Pharaoh's daughter looked at the young girl standing eagerly before her and immediately the whole situation became clear. The girl was evidently the child's sister, engaged in a plot to preserve the babe from death. Did not the girl's eagerness manifest a personal interest in the child's care? Did not her very features resemble those of the child? The girl wanted to return her brother to their mother. But, then, it made no difference. The child was fair to look upon,

and she had determined to take it into the palace for her own. As yet the child was too young. It needed a nurse. Who would care better for him than his natural mother? She told the young girl, “Go,” and soon the girl returned with her mother. Pharaoh’s daughter gave to Jochebed her instructions, “Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages” (Ex. 2:9).

There was little cause for concern that evening in the palace of Pharaoh. True, one Hebrew child had been spared from death, and that with the approval of Pharaoh, for he could hardly deny the plea of a favored daughter. But what did it really matter? That child was but one among many, and plans were already in the making to have the child educated in Pharaoh’s own schools. The situation was well under control. What Pharaoh did not realize was that behind that one seemingly insignificant exception was the will of Israel’s God. Moses, the child drawn from the river, would rise up to put to naught all of the boasting of that evil kingdom. The very efforts of Pharaoh were hastening Egypt’s destruction. As the psalmist wrote many years later, “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision” (Ps. 2:1–2, 4).

Chapter 3

MOSES CHOOSING TO SUFFER WITH GOD'S PEOPLE

24. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
25. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;
26. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. (Hebrews 11:24–26)

22. And Moses was learned in all of the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.
23. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. (Acts 7:22–23)

And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens. (Exodus 2:11)

It was an anxious, wondering, fearful Jochebed who hurriedly followed her daughter Miriam toward the group of Egyptian women standing by the bank of the Nile. In the middle of the group was Pharaoh's daughter, and at her feet was the ark of bulrushes that Jochebed knew so well. Even as Miriam had excitedly related, these women had discovered her son. But once she had approached the women, Jochebed's face lost its look of fear, her eyes began to sparkle with joy, and her heart breathed a prayer of thanksgiving, for Pharaoh's daughter spoke, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages" (Ex. 2:9). Jochebed's son was not going to

die; in fact, he was to be returned to her own home. The providence of God had provided for it, and the authority of Pharaoh's throne had commanded it.

Once again peace returned to the humble home of Amram and Jochebed. No longer did they need to fear the footsteps that passed by their doorway. The child had been given an Egyptian name, Moses, and was known as a son of Pharaoh's daughter. An edict of the throne protected him. Even the threat of poverty and hunger had disappeared. At regular intervals funds were received from the palace sufficient for all of the child's needs and enough for the family besides. Only one cause for concern remained: Moses could not remain always with his parents. Pharaoh's daughter wanted him for her own. She would allow Moses to remain with his parents only through the tender years of early childhood when he needed special care. After that he would be taken away to be placed in the courts of Pharaoh's heathen palace. There he would be in the midst of the world, far removed from all of the children of God. Very early Amram and Jochebed began to prepare the child for that day. There was no time to spare. From the moment the child Moses began to show signs of comprehension, they taught him the truth of the covenant and began to warn him concerning the dangers that he in a peculiar way would have to withstand. Never was Moses allowed to think that his life would be easy or that his instruction in the truth could be allowed to wait.

We do not know how frequently during these early years Jochebed was required to bring the child to the palace so that Pharaoh's daughter could cuddle him and play with him like a toy. Neither do we know how often a royal embassy approached their humble home to see if the child was being properly kept. Those were times of fear, for it was never known whether or not the time had come when Moses was to be taken away. At such times, while the parents stood quietly by in the silence of fear, they realized how powerless they were. The life of their child was in the hand of the Lord. For them there was only one comfort. From his earliest years Moses had

shown an unusual interest in all that his parents sought to teach him. Eagerly he listened as they told him over and over again of all that had been passed on from the fathers before them. He memorized and retained all that was known about their God and his gracious covenant promises. He never neglected the opportunity to learn, seeming to understand that for him it was of special importance. It was evident to the parents that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. In this they found comfort and gave God thanks. Their prayers never ceased to ascend unto heaven in Moses' behalf.

Finally, the much-feared time came. Pharaoh's daughter decided that Moses should be taken to make his home in the palace. With heavy hearts the family made the last preparations for his departure. There were the last words of instruction and warning; there was the last kneeling together in prayer; and then there were the last farewells. With tear-blurred eyes the parents watched their child being led away. He looked so small, so much in need of his parents' care, so incapable of standing in the midst of an evil world. As the small figure faded into the distance, they knew that his heart yearned for them even as theirs did for him; but henceforth all they would be able to do for him would be to pray. Only the grace of God could enable him to endure.

It was a strangely different world in which the child Moses now found himself making his home. In place of the unadorned Hebrew hut, there was the regal splendor of the palace. In the place of the simple religious instruction of his parents, there were elaborate discourses by the most learned men of the ancient world. In place of the intimate family circle, there was the great household of Pharaoh with countless servants ready at any time to do his every bidding. Gone were the watchful eyes of his parents, ready to reprimand him for what was wrong as well as to encourage him in the right. Gone was the intimacy of a home united in love and spiritual devotion. Gone was mutual awareness of a God who has made the world and to whom all of the allegiances of life belong. The new surroundings were entirely different. There were governors and tutors who,

even though he was young, were concerned with nothing more than winning his favor. There were spectacular rituals and ceremonies that, although engaged in with much pretentiousness, were in reality mostly shams. Amid all of the pomp and splendor of the court, there was a basic shallowness of life in which everyone lived for himself.

Of greatest importance for Moses in his young life was the opportunity that came to him for learning. As a member of the royal family, it was expected that he would eventually become a leader and a judge among the people. The whole of his life was centered in preparation for this. For such preparation there was no better place than ancient Egypt. It was by far the most advanced of all of the ancient kingdoms. It abounded in the knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, and chemistry. Many of the things known by them we in our day might consider to be more recent discoveries. They were learned in music and poetry, having libraries with thousands of volumes. The best of the instruction that this country could afford was given to Moses. Blessed with extraordinary ability by God, he advanced very rapidly in his learning. Stephen, many years later, expressed it like this: "And Moses was learned in all of the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7:22).

The struggles that went on in the heart of Moses during these years we can only imagine. Were there days and weeks on end when he was torn between the immense learning of his teachers and the simple faith he had learned from his parents? Were there times when he was sorely tempted to throw himself into all of the sensual pleasures that were waiting for him in that heathen court? Were there moments when his pride whelmed up within him urging him to grasp the opportunities afforded, to make for himself a name in the midst of the world? Were there nights when he tossed upon his bed with heavy heart because he had allowed himself to follow much farther in the ways of the world than in his heart he knew was right? Yet through it all Moses' faith prevailed. It had to, for he was a child of God. As he grew in years he began to realize more and more that all of the learning of the Egyptians did not have the fundamental

depth and soundness of the simple faith that he had learned from the lips of his parents. The Egyptians had much knowledge and many pleasures, but in their hearts they had no peace. Living in the midst of the world, Moses was not of the world. He could not think of himself as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. All of the treasures of Egypt held no real attachment for him; its pleasures he could not enjoy. Within his own heart he always remained the son of simple Amram and Jochebed, a Hebrew and a child of God.

Slowly the years went by, and Moses came to maturity. Still Moses took no permanent position in the government, nor did he engage himself in a marriage. Was this not contrary to the efforts and urgings of his foster mother and many others of the royal court? Surely for a man of Moses' ability the opportunities were many. As he grew, Moses withdrew more from public life. His heart was with the Hebrews laboring in the field. These were his people, and he could not forget them. His prayer and longing was for their deliverance. Already to Abraham it had been told that after four hundred years deliverance would come. Moses could not bind himself to the Egyptians. He had to make plans so that he could go with his people.

Gradually Moses took to walking out in the fields, and especially to those places where the Hebrews were working. His sympathies were there, and he could not keep himself away. There he saw it in all of its gruesome detail—the labor and toil, the sweat and the blood, the bodies weary and fainting, red with the stripes of whips. Time and again he flinched as he gazed on the blows of the taskmasters; he groaned within himself along with the cries of the workers; he fled with unbelievable anguish to the peace and quiet of the palace. Still he went again and again to stare with glassy eyes. With a pained and weary heart he watched, and what made it so hard was that these were his brethren, the children of his God.

Slowly the mind of Moses began to evaluate the facts. God had foretold this all, and the time for deliverance was approaching. The nation of Israel was great and mighty in spite of her cruel oppression. All she needed was a leader, and then who could prevent her from

returning to Canaan? With the blessing of Almighty God upon her, no one could keep her from going.

Again Moses' mind turned to consider his own life. There was first his miraculous preservation from death but a few months after he was born, which spoke so evidently of the gracious providence of God. Then there were the early years of concentrated instruction by his parents in all of the truth of God's covenant. Finally, there were the years of specialized preparation in the palace to qualify him as a leader of people and a judge among men. What did it all mean? Could anything be more evident than that God was preparing him to deliver his people from bondage? The very thought excited the ambition of Moses as nothing before had ever done.

Still, there were two things that marred Moses' plans for the future. The first was for him the most painful. The children of Israel refused to recognize him as their brother. Perhaps they knew that he was a son of Amram and Jochebed, but that no longer made any difference. When he came into the fields with his royal Egyptian dress, they eyed him with suspicion. While *they* labored in bondage, *he* was refined in labor and dress. While the taskmasters beat them into submission, they treated Moses with utmost respect. All of Moses' sympathetic looks and words would not relieve their suspicions. As long as this were true, they would never receive him as their leader.

And then there was the one other difficulty that remained: God had not called him to be Israel's leader. All of his plans were built upon his own suppositions. Until the Lord spoke, he could only wait.

So the years passed by as Moses planned and waited—waited for a calling from God.