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Moses - Forsaking Egypt

When did Moses forsake Egypt?

When I consider all the references, it seemed that there was a time before his killing the Egyptian when he had dealings with God. With all the world of ancient Egypt, with its wealth and pleasures which could have been his, he weighted it against the privileged place Israel had with God, and deemed the reproach of Christ and things of eternity were more valuable than all Egypt could supply.

A scripture which can be a puzzle is Hebrews 11:27 where it is recorded, "By faith he (Moses) forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible". Yet it is very evident by killing the Egyptian his life was in danger, this was treason. "Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well" (Ex. 2:15). Those statements apparently are contradictory. When did Moses forsake Egypt? Perhaps using the parable of the prodigal son might help. When did the prodigal son leave the father's house? Was it when he left the home for the far off fields (Lk. 15:13)? Had he already left it in heart when he packed his belongings, or had he left when he asked for his portion of the inheritance (Lk. 15:12)? It is my thought that he began to leave the father's house when he first entertained the thoughts of the distant land. As the thought of being free from the restraints of home and doing what he desired the imagining grew stronger. He was leaving the home in heart, so Moses had forsaken Egypt in heart some time before He slew the Egyptian.

- a) The killing of the Egyptian was a very foolish activity for there was no way he could have released the children of Israel from Egypt one by one. It would have soon got to Pharaoh's ears that Egyptians were being slain by some Israelite and all the power and military might to Egypt would have come down on Moses and the Israelites.
- b) Moses was acting with zeal wanting to release his people (one of his brethren Ex. 2:11) but without knowledge. He was wrong in the method and timing.
- c) It would have been before he slew the Egyptian he refuses to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than the pleasures of sin (Heb. 11:24-27).

Moses made a rash decision not moving by faith or in fellowship with God. The Lord graciously used this activity to remove Moses from Egypt for further lessons in the school of God. When Hebrews 11:24-26 is carefully read, it will be observed three times things Moses did by faith:

- a) By faith he refused, he chose and he esteemed (Heb. 11:24).
- b) By faith he forsook Egypt (Heb. 11:27).
- c) By faith he kept the passover (Heb. 11:28).
 - i) To do any of these decisions necessitated him hearing the word of God for faith cometh by hearing (Rom. 10:17), therefore Moses must have heard from God. He was not to accept the dignity of being called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Since faith comes from hearing and hearing comes by listening to God, this is the reason the writer to the Hebrews could write it was by faith.
 - ii) Furthermore, Moses was not a little child when his decisions were made for Exodus 2:11 and Hebrews 11:24 informs us that he was grown up. The word in Exodus 2:11 indicates an increase in stature and years. The wording in Hebrews indicates to have become great.

Waiting God's time

A major part of Moses' education in the school of God was a lesson which can be difficult for us to learn. It is waiting for God's time to do something and there is a temptation to rush into a work because we think time is wasted if we do not move. Moses had to learn to wait on God's timing. The result was:

- a) He acted without God's commendation
- b) He did not seek to release Israel by God's way
- c) He did not wait for God's timing

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When Moses killed the Egyptian, he was attempting to fulfil the will and purposes of God by his own abilities and thoughts for he knew the time was very close (Gen. 15:13-14). What a hero he would have been in Jewish history, Moses delivered the Children of Israel and Pharaoh could not stop him, but God will not share His glory with another (Isa. 42:8, 11). The Lord let Moses make a major error to help him learn that.

One can be sure it was not the will of God for Moses to kill the Egyptian. Because of that action a man went into eternity, and living in that paganism, died without knowing about God's way of justification which Abraham knew about (Rom. 4:2-4).

. . . . Rowan Jennings