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## Moses - Midian to Egypt and Before Pharaoh

### Who was Pharaoh?

The first observation is that the term “Pharaoh” is used both as a name and a title. When used as a title, it is similar to a shah, king, or potentate. Throughout the books of Moses there is no hint as to which Pharaoh was the ruler at the time of the exodus. It is impossible to specifically identify him. He is referred to as “Pharaoh” (Ex. 1:11), “Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Ex. 6:11), “King of Egypt” (Ex. 1:15). There can be the argument that it was Thutmose IV but it is irrelevant.

Who this Pharaoh was we do not know with certainty and there has been as much as five kings suggested. Had God wanted us to know who it was it would have been recorded. That which is manifested is the attitude of the king toward God and his disdain for the children of Israel.

- a) From a reading of Isaiah which reads, “For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause” (Isa. 52:4). It may be argued the word Assyrian is an obscure title for the Egyptian King. However, the word “Assyrian” is used thirteen times in the scriptures, and it never is a substitute for an Egyptian. When or how they became the ruling power with the Pharaoh being lesser king is not known. He was not one of the Hyksos dynasty, however, he had great authority. This being so, the ordinary nomad walking to Egypt could never have an audience with the Pharaoh. Because Moses was going to meet the Pharaoh, he could not go in apologetically and make a suggestion to Pharaoh (Ex. 5:1). He was to go in with the confident assurance God was with him. He was to tell Pharaoh that which God demanded him to do. It was not a polite suggestion or request.

When we think of Moses, we consider him as a great man, and he was. However, to the Israelites and the Egyptians, he was a nomad who came in from the desert and declared to the children of Israel that God was going to release them and demanded of Pharaoh to let them go. The natural reaction of the Prince of Egypt was contempt (Ex 5:2). The Egyptians had some 2000 gods and goddesses, so who was Moses’s God to make demands of Pharaoh who was seen as a god to the Egyptians? In giving the command to let my people go (Ex. 5:1; 7:16; 8:1; 9:1) there is the unspoken acknowledgment that Moses God is superior to Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt. This posed a major question, “How can a satanically darkened mind and stubborn prideful heart be broken to the point where it yields to the Living God?. God also had Moses inform Pharaoh some of the consequences if he would not let them go (Ex. 8:21; 10:4) and almost a plead with Pharaoh to let them go (Ex. 10:1).

### The Slaying of Moses

The narrative of God who sought to slay Moses (Ex. 4:24) is interesting. Why after telling Moses he was going to send him to Egypt to deliver his people would God then seek to slay him? How this came about we do not know, but it seems from the context that Zipporah had objected to the circumcision of her boys, so indicating she was not only a Gentile, but opposed to the rights and laws of God. One would expect there were situations in the home between her and Moses since she was back in her father’s house when God used Moses on the greatest demonstration of God’s power in the redemption and deliverance of His people.

### Into Egypt

When Moses and Aaron went into Egypt the first activity was to gather the elders of Israel (Ex. 4:29). Having done so, he spoke of how God had sent him and showed the signs (Ex. 3:16-17; 4:1-9). The Lord knew the message of Moses would be met with scepticism and unbelief therefore God gave Moses the signs for them (Ex. 4:1, 5, 8, 9). The first two signs were spoken of as “the voice” (v. 9) because this is the Lord speaking through the signs. It seems that the third sign was that which clinched the people to believe (v. 41).

The question then becomes, “Did the signs have a deeper significance, a spiritual significance, or were they for the sole purpose of assurance of who Moses was? On this I have reservations. It is my understanding the purpose of the signs (Ex. 3:16-17) was to convince the Israelites that Moses was sent by God to deliver them and had been

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sent by God (Ex. 4:5), “hath appeared unto thee” note the word “they” (vv. 1, 5, 8, 9). The signs assured Moses that God was with him, and in addition the Israelites would be assured of leaving Egypt and go to their promised inheritance. This would really be questioned when the Egyptian magicians did the same things, thus indicating their gods were just as almighty as Moses' God.

#### Moses In Midian and Going To Pharaoh

Moses went into Pharaoh's palace knowing that Pharaoh would not let them go (Ex. 4:21) and facing Pharaoh said, “Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness” (Ex. 5:1). Pharaoh had no idea of who he was dealing with and God started to send the plagues.

- a) Observation: The purposes of the plagues were at least fourfold:
  - i) “The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD” (Ex. 7:5)
  - ii) “Against all the gods of Egypt” (Ex. 12:12)
  - iii) To demonstrate to his people the superiority of God above all earthly idols by their gods not being able to do what God did.
  - iv) To God to show forth His power (Ex. 9:16)
- b) One observation is Moses told Pharaoh when a plague would begin (Ex. 7:16-17; 8:2, 21-23; 9:3-5; 9:13-15) and when it would end (Ex. 8:10; 9:29).

In the first meeting with Pharaoh, Moses, in the name of God, declares to Pharaoh to let God's “people go”. He declares to Pharaoh that they are God's people, “Let my people go” (Ex. 5:1). The God of the Hebrews meant nothing to Pharaoh so in contempt he asks, “Who is the Lord?” (Ex. 5:2). The Prince of Egypt, being great in his own mind, failed to realize God had raised him to that position (Rom. 9:17; Ex.14:17-18). Instead of letting God's people go he made life more bitter for them. God knew that they would be under great bondage and such would be the case for 400 years. That being so, from when Moses was born there were still 80 years to go before the exodus. When Moses killed the Egyptians there were still 40 years to go.

. . . . Rowan Jennings