

• *Moses had to learn faithfulness and meekness*

Moses became famous for faithfulness and for meekness. At one stage of his life God gave him a detailed plan for the building of the tabernacle and Moses did everything 'just as Yahweh commanded him'<sup>□1</sup>. 'Moses was faithful in all God's house'<sup>□2</sup>. However Moses was not always minutely and exactly obedient to God. Moses later gained a reputation for meekness<sup>□3</sup>, but he had not always been that way!

□1 Ex 40:16  
□2 Heb 3:2  
□3 Num 12:3

**1. Detailed faithfulness was something Moses had to learn**

• *Detailed instructions*

1. **Detailed faithfulness was something Moses had to learn.** We have seen that he had to learn to be faithful in the matter of the circumcision of his son. Also when Moses first went to Pharaoh he was not at first minutely faithful. According to Exodus 3:18 Moses was told (i) to take elders with him when he went to Pharaoh<sup>□1</sup>. (ii) He was to explain who 'Yahweh' was and should speak of 'Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews'. (iii) They were to be polite: 'Please let us take a three-day journey...' (the Hebrew of this phrase is polite). (iv) They were to ask only for a temporary release for a three-day journey, to offer sacrifices to Yahweh.

□1 3:18

• *But obeyed carelessly*

But Moses was quite careless in the way he obeyed these instructions. He takes Aaron and they go to Pharaoh. We notice (i) Moses did not take the elders. Moses and Aaron went alone. (ii) The polite language of Exodus 3:18 was not followed. Without any courtesy and with no explanations they speak demandingly and abruptly. 'Thus says Yahweh, God of Israel: "Let my people go..."'<sup>□1</sup>. (iii) Moses used the term 'Yahweh, God of Israel' which did not make sense to Pharaoh who did not know the term 'Yahweh' or the term 'Israel'. (iv) Moses gave the impression that he was asking for total release – although God had said this would only come eventually after His forceful judgements upon the land.

□1 5:1

**2. Moses' lack of attention to detail added burdens on the Israelites**

2. **Moses' lack of attention to detail brought added burdens upon the Israelites.** Pharaoh refused to let Israel go<sup>□1</sup>. God had said this would happen but Pharaoh was more hostile than God had said. Moses tried to explain<sup>□2</sup>, as he should have done from the very beginning. He became more accurate in his request<sup>□3</sup>. But it was too late. An arrogant demand has produced an arrogant response. Pharaoh intensifies the oppression of Israel<sup>□4</sup>. When the people put a petition before Pharaoh they discover Moses' visit to Pharaoh is the cause of their added burdens<sup>□5</sup>. Then they blame Moses and Aaron for their troubles<sup>□6</sup>.

□1 5:2  
□2 5:3  
□3 5:3  
□4 5:4-9  
□5 5:10-19  
□6 5:20-21

• *Moses' tactlessness as he spoke to Pharaoh brought added suffering*

God had told Moses what would happen<sup>□1</sup> but there was no mention of increased suffering for the Israelites and God had said nothing about the Israelite leaders criticising Moses. Moses' tactlessness as he spoke to Pharaoh brought added suffering which was no part of God's original plan.

□1 3:16-22

**3. Moses' mistakes drive him back to God**

3. **Moses' mistakes drive him back to God.** Moses' failing to attend to the manner with which he was to approach Pharaoh has got him into trouble, but he knows what to do with his mistake. 'Then Moses returned to Yahweh...' <sup>□1</sup>. He puts all his questions and complaints to God<sup>□2</sup>. That is the best thing to do when we go wrong and disaster comes upon us. We take it to God. When a promise seems not to be fulfilled ('You have not delivered this people...!') we turn the promise into prayer.

□1 5:22  
□2 5:22-23

## 4. Renewed promises

4. **God simply encourages Moses with renewed promises.** God does not answer Moses' question ('Why have you brought harm. . .?'). Moses himself will have to give more thought to his lack of attention to detailed obedience, and his lack of meekness. All that God does is give Moses fresh encouragement.

• Assurance

He assures Moses that God's plan is about to go forward. God is about to act more forcefully, and 'under compulsion' Pharaoh will yield to God's wishes<sup>□1</sup>. He reminds Moses that He is about to reveal the meaning of His name, Yahweh<sup>□2</sup>. God is about to give meaning to the name 'Yahweh'. Previously, God had revealed Himself mainly as 'El Shaddai' – the God who has mighty power to rescue the helpless. Now He is about to give content and definition to the name 'Yahweh'. The name was known before but its full significance was not realised. Jacob had wanted to know God's name<sup>□3</sup> but God had not answered him. He lets Moses know that He is about to further establish the covenant-oath given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob<sup>□4</sup>. God had given a 'covenant of generosity' to Abraham. The oath had been given<sup>□5</sup>; it was absolutely certain that the promise to Abraham would be fulfilled. What was not quite certain was the timing. God lets Moses know that a new move is about to be made. God is taking a further step to fulfil His sworn promise to Abraham.

• God lets Moses know about a new move

• The Hebrews are too despondent to receive encouragement

• Moses learns to be faithful despite his people

Moses must realise how much sympathy God has for the Hebrews<sup>□1</sup> and must pass on a word of encouragement to them<sup>□2</sup>. Moses passes on the message but the Hebrews are too despondent to take it to heart<sup>□3</sup>. It is the first hint that although the Hebrews will be saved by faith<sup>□4</sup>, their faith will be weak, despondent and sometimes rebellious. Moses is learning lessons of faithfulness. He is learning to be faithful himself, despite the weakness of his people and the greatness of any discouragements that will come to him.

## 5. Moses is re-commissioned

5. **Moses is re-commissioned.** Despite the sufferings that have come because of Moses' imprecise obedience, God begins again with Moses. He sends Moses back to speak to Pharaoh<sup>□1</sup>. Moses is doubtful<sup>□2</sup>, but Aaron will go with him and the command is emphatic. They must do as God is saying<sup>□3</sup>. Moses' unsteady response to God's call makes no difference to God. God does not change His mind about us because of our unsteadiness. The call of God in Moses' life continues.

□1 6:1  
 □2 6:2-3  
 □3 Gen 32:29  
 □4 6:4  
 □5 Gen 22:16

□1 6:5  
 □2 6:6-8  
 □3 6:9  
 □4 Heb 11:29

□1 6:10-11  
 □2 6:12  
 □3 6:13



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