

## MOSES “ESCAPED THE EDGE OF THE SWORD”

**Hebrews 11:32-34** *“What more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”*

Moses is twice mentioned by name in this chapter celebrating great faith, but he is also included in this general reference to those who *“escaped the edge of the sword”*.

### I. MOSES ESCAPED THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

**A. Exodus 1:15-2:10** *“The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; and he said, ‘When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.’ But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, ‘Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?’ And the midwives said to Pharaoh, ‘Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them.’ Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them. So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, ‘Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.’ And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and*

*laid it in the reeds by the river's bank. And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.' Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?' And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Go.' So the maiden went and called the child's mother. Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed him. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, 'Because I drew him out of the water.'"*

Pharaoh meant to reduce the risk in Egypt of an uprising by the alien Hebrews by means of an infanticide, drowning the male heirs of Israel at birth.

However, the midwives refused to participate and Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses, did what they could to protect their son.

- B. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:13-14** *"Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good."*

God means for governing authorities to be obeyed inasmuch as they exist to praise good and punish evil. However, when government becomes destructive toward these purposes, upending God's design for them, obeying them is no longer the Lord's will.

- C. Acts 4:18-20** *"They called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you*

*judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”*

**Acts 5:27-29** *“The high priest asked them, saying, ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!’ But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’”*

The apostles twice gave example, showing that obedience to human authority is secondary to obedience to God. The Hebrew midwives and Moses’ parents understood this principle.

- D. Psalm 19:7** *“The law of Jehovah is perfect, converting the soul.”*

Whereas God’s law is perfect, the laws of men... not so much.

- E. Hebrews 11:23** *“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command.”*

Laws established in defiance of divine will are not meant to be feared.

- F. Joshua 2:1-7** *“Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, ‘Go, view the land, especially Jericho.’ So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, ‘Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country.’ So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, ‘Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country.’ Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, ‘Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them.’ (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the*

gate.”

**1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 19:11-14** *“Saul also sent messengers to David’s house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And Michal, David’s wife, told him, saying, ‘If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed.’ So Michal let David down through a window. And he went and fled and escaped. And Michal took an image and laid it in the bed, put a cover of goats’ hair for his head, and covered it with clothes. So when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, ‘He is sick.’”*

Like Shiprah and Puah before them, Rahab, and later Michal, also spoke counterfactually in order to save innocent life. These were not lies because there was nothing dishonest about preserving human life.

## **II. MOSES ESCAPED PHARAOH’S VENGEANCE**

- A. Exodus 2:11-15; 4:19** *“When Moses was grown... he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, ‘Why are you striking your companion?’ Then he said, ‘Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’ So Moses feared and said, ‘Surely this thing is known!’ When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian.”*

Moses went on the lam after killing an Egyptian who was brutalizing a Hebrew because Pharaoh learned of the matter and intended to execute him for it.

- B. Hebrews 11:24-27** *“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to*

*the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.”*

Just as his parents had not feared the king’s command, so Moses himself did not fear the Egyptian king’s wrath. His departure from Egypt was more than fleeing; it was forsaking! It was the choice of affliction over pleasure.

- C. **Acts 7:22-28** *“Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. ‘Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?’ But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?’ Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian.”*

Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, described the action of Moses as defending and avenging the oppressed! It was not murder. It was not wrong at all. It was justice, according to inspiration.

- D. **Ecclesiastes 3:1, 3** *“To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven: ...A time to kill.”*

Moses knew when it was time to kill.

### III. MOSES ESCAPED GOD’S PUNISHMENT

- A. **Exodus 4:24-26** *“It came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that Jehovah met him and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses’ feet, and said, ‘Surely you*

*are a husband of blood to me!’ So He let him go. Then she said, ‘You are a husband of blood!’ — because of the circumcision.”*

Moses had already been summoned by God to deliver the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage when the Almighty sought to slay him for failing to circumcise his son.

- B. *Genesis 17:9-14*** *“God said to Abraham: ‘As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.’”*

Centuries before Moses even lived, his forefather Abraham was given the covenant of circumcision. Moses had every reason to know this and comply with it.

- C. *James 4:17*** *“To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

Not every sin is an act of immorality or falsehood. Some are sins of omission, whereby God’s commands have been neglected.

- D. *Romans 6:23*** *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Death is the eventual outcome of sin, but when Moses failed to circumcise his son, God was ready to kill him right then

- E. Proverbs 31:10-11** *“Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her.”*

Moses was blessed with a wife of virtue, who was willing to do the right thing even when her husband failed. Abigail was such a wife for Nabal – her actions sparing his life despite himself (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 25). And Mrs. Pilate tried to be that wife for Pontius, but he refused to hear her wisdom (Matthew 27:19).

- F. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:16** *“From now on, we regard no one according to the flesh.”*

Despite the greatness of Moses, he sinned, and God confronted that sin. No one is so special that he cannot be reproved for his error.