

Moses Memoirs

Would you like to be the leader of a great nation? A “hero of the faith”? I would advise against it, unless, of course, God orders you! I had a storybook childhood, rescued from the Nile by a daughter of Pharaoh, and cared for by my own mother as a hired wet nurse. Then I was educated in the knowledge of Egypt, the highest civilization of the entire world.

I realized I was a Hebrew and when I was able to wander the land and see how my people were treated, I reacted in anger and got myself in big trouble with Pharaoh. My only choice was to get out of the country. So I essentially took a new identity as a shepherd – for 40 years. I married and raised a family and at the age of 80 thought my past was pretty well covered.

But then God intervened and made it clear that I had another assignment, one that seemed to require a younger man, or at least one with different gifts. I objected and insisted that I needed a spokesman. God appointed my brother Aaron – I later had reason to regret my request. Well, nearly everybody knows how the LORD God provided a way out of Egypt for the entire nation, in a manner that caused the Egyptians not only to say, “Good riddance” but to actually gift us with incredible wealth.

After seeing the 10 plagues and the parting of the Red Sea, you would have thought that the people would conscientiously follow the LORD to the destination of his choice, But no! It was not that logical or simple. They are called “The Children of Israel.” I think it is because they are permanently stuck at the 3 year old stage. “No!” “I won’t!” “It’s not fair” “You’re not the boss of me!” “Are we there yet?” “I want to go home!”

Having children helps us understand what God goes through with all of us. I had raised my own sons and thought I was done with that stage of life, but I wasn’t. It made me understand the incredible mercy and patience of God. One time, when it appeared that he was ready to destroy them, it was actually a way to get me on the side of the people by reminding God – as if he needed it – that if they died in the desert, his name would be disgraced.

When I came down the mountain and found my own older brother directing worship of a golden calf, giving the feeble excuse that, “I put the gold in the fire and out came this calf,” I would have called down fire from heaven if it were not for my own valid arguments.

As we approached the Jordan River, I thought that it would soon be over and I could retire with the people safely in the Promised Land. NOT!! Incredibly, 10 of the 12 spies reported that although it was a good land, the inhabitants were too strong, too big and the cities too well fortified. The people bought that pessimistic line. It might have been excusable if they had no experience of the LORD’s power, but they had just walked away from the world’s number one superpower, with the wealth of that land, not having had to raise a sword or spear! Only Caleb and Joshua trusted God. Now, not only did the people have to spend 40 more years in the wilderness, so did I!!

In the end, I could not enter the land, although I was allowed to see it. It was because of my temper again, striking the rock when I was supposed to speak to it. But it was God’s will. My part was over and a new generation was needed for the next phase of God’s project. I got a graceful exit and my grave was protected from becoming a shrine – it would have been just like my countrymen to have done something like that. It all points to the amazing grace of Jehovah, who loves us and forgives us, because of his mercy and his name. And he repeatedly gives us reason to have faith in him, no matter the obstacles or dangers.