

MOSES—GOD’S SLAVE

by Avram Yehoshua

<http://SeedofAbraham.net>

What would make a man give up his freedom and become a slave to God? I know the word ‘slave’ linked with ‘God’ may sound offensive. A slave is generally one who is forced to do the will of another; whether he wants to or not. The concept is usually seen with man enslaving another human being. The word associated with that is most often ‘cruelty.’ And so translators have opted for a different description of this word when used with Moses; servant.

In Hebrew however, the word for slave and servant are the same. עֶבֶד (*eh-ved*), can be equally translated ‘servant’ or ‘slave.’¹ After the death of Moses, Yahveh speaks with Joshua and says, ‘Moses my ‘*eh-ved*’ is dead, and now rise up...’ (Joshua 1:2). The English translations have the word ‘servant,’ but I have come to see that it should be *slave*. Moses was a slave of Yahveh because he knew that only enslaved² to Yahveh, was Life. When Moses descends from Mt. Sinai the second time, his face literally shone forth with the Glory of Yahveh (Exodus 34:29-35). He would become a living reflection of who Yahveh was. But Moses didn’t start off this way.

When Moses first meets Yahveh (Exodus 3:6ff), there’s a clash of wills. Moses reluctantly consents to be sent to Pharaoh, to tell him that he must let his slave people, the Hebrews, go free. Pharaoh is uncooperative though. He fails to be persuaded by the ‘staff being turned into a snake’ and stubbornly refuses to give way to God’s Will. We see though, that Pharaoh really didn’t know the God of the Hebrew slaves:

“And Pharaoh said, ‘Who is Yahveh, that I should obey His Voice to let Israel go? *I do not know Yahveh*, nor will I let Israel go’” (Exodus 5:2).

To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Yahveh would appear in dreams and visions. To Joseph, He would work behind the scenes. But in Moses, Yahveh would *explode* upon history. Eventually, Pharaoh would wish that he had never heard of the God of the Hebrews.

From the time that Moses encounters Yahveh, till his first 40 days in Yahveh’s Presence, Moses will *grow* into the slave of Yahveh. The difference between a servant and a slave is that a servant can leave at any time. A slave cannot. Moses will voluntarily place himself in that position because of his love for God.³ Listen to how pitiful Moses sounds though, when he pleads with Pharaoh to let Israel go; ‘So they (Moses and Aaron), said, ‘The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days’ journey into the desert and sacrifice to Yahveh our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.’ It wasn’t the Egyptians that would get sick or be killed if Pharaoh didn’t relent, but the Hebrews! The Moses who enters Egypt, is not the same one who leaves. But it would take time. It would be a process of Moses slowly coming to realize that he could fully trust Yahveh, to be his God.

¹ Benjamin Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Pub. House, 1979) p. 583. Davidson states that it can also be ‘applied to a vassal, and any one employed in the service of a king...one doing the will of God, as a true worshiper...’

² R. L. Harris, Editor; Gleason Archer, Jr. and Bruce Waltke, Associate Editors, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 639. The intensive meaning of the verb for slave means, ‘to enslave...the most basic idea of *eh-ved* is that of a slave.’

³ Ex. 21:5-6: “But if the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife and my children. I will not go out as a free man, then his master shall bring him to God and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl and he shall serve him *forever*.’”

The Sons of Israel would turn against Moses, God's sent one,⁴ having to find their own straw now, to make the bricks for Pharaoh. They would curse Moses for 'putting a sword into Pharaoh's hand to kill' them (Ex. 5:21). And Moses would become disoriented and confused (Ex. 5:22-23), but Yahveh would deliver unto Israel, in Egypt, the Gospel (Great News) of Salvation⁵ when He would declare to Moses, what He would *do*, *be* and *give* to His people Israel:

'Therefore say to the Sons of Israel: I am Yahveh. I will bring you out from under the yokes of the Egyptians. I will free you from their slavery, and I will redeem you with an outstretched Arm and with great judgments' (verse 6).

'I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am Yahveh your God, who brings you out from under the yokes of the Egyptians' (v. 7).

'And I will bring you into the Land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And I will give it to you as a possession; I am Yahveh' (verse 8; Ex. 6:6-8).

Notice that verse 6 deals with Yahveh saving Israel from slavery; what He will *do* for them. And that verse 7 has Yahveh taking Israel for Himself; what He will *be* to them; their God. And verse 8 tells us that Israel will enter into the Land that Yahveh has for them; or what He will *give* to them.

This encapsulates the Great News in Messiah Yeshua also. Belief in Yeshua sets us free from the slavery to sin and death (what He will *do* for us). Yeshua becomes our Messiah (what He will *be* for us; Savior-King). And we are given the 'Land of Life' which translates to knowing God here on Earth, and being with Him forever in the New Jerusalem (what He will *give* to us).

After the second plague of frogs, we find Moses still patronizing Pharaoh when he says, 'Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses...' (Ex. 8:9). But by the fourth plague, Moses has come to see that Pharaoh is a liar (for he promised to let Israel go in the second plague, but doesn't). Listen to how Moses responds when flies swarm upon Pharaoh and his people, and he again tells Moses that Israel can go. This time, Moses isn't as quick to bow down:

"Then Moses said, 'Indeed I am going out from you and I will entreat Yahveh that the swarms of flies may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people, *but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully anymore* in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Yahveh' (Exodus 8:29).

There's only one way that Moses can admonish the king of Egypt like this. Moses has grown in awe of Yahveh. Pharaoh has come down a few notches. That's not a small achievement because Pharaoh was god on Earth; he held life and death in his hands.

The 10th Plague, the Passover of Yahveh, the death of the first born of Egypt, and the sparing of the Israel's first born (along with the departure from Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea), bring Israel and Moses to the foot of Mt. Sinai. Moses ascends for the first of two 40 day fasts in the Presence of Yahveh. When he returns with the 10 Commandments, symbolizing all the Word of God, he finds that Israel has quickly turned aside from the Way in which they were to go. They had made themselves a god of gold and were lusting after one another.

⁴ Yeshua refers to Himself as the Sent One (a title of Messiah) 39 times in the Great News according to John.

⁵ This is what the writer of Hebrews 4:2 means when he states: 'For indeed we have had Good News preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them because it was not united by faith in those who heard.'

It took God only one day to get Israel out of Egypt; but 40 years to get Egypt out of Israel. It wasn't because Yahveh couldn't bring them into the Promised Land, but because Israel despised Yahveh their God (Numbers 14:11). They would continually refuse to enslave themselves to Him. On the Mountain though, Moses becomes a slave to God. His heart is transformed. He doesn't do the Will of God reluctantly, but from his very heart.

Having destroyed the god of gold, and 3,000 of the instigators (Exodus 32), Moses returns to Mt. Sinai, to see if Yahveh will forgive Israel for sinning against Yahveh, for causing Him so much pain.⁶ At this point, Moses doesn't know if Yahveh will do it. Moses approaches Yahveh and says:

'...Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold; yet now, *if You will forgive their sin...*but if not, I pray, *blot me out of Your Book* which You have written.' (Exodus 32:31-32)

Moses placed his eternal life in the balance. He loved sinful Israel so much, that if Yahveh would not forgive them, then Moses didn't want to be written in *the Book of Life*. Moses was married to Israel.⁷ He was one with sinful Israel. The Heart of Yahveh was being seen in a man. The Will of Yahveh flowed through Moses. For Yahveh needed someone to intercede for Israel. It couldn't be Israel, for they were in a sinful position. It had to be Moses. Moses was Yahveh's slave. He had been brought to the point of laying down his own (eternal) life, for another. Moses is now a perfect picture of the Messiah. For Yeshua intercedes for us who believe, who sin against Yahveh.⁸

In Numbers 12:3 it says that Moses was the meekest (most humble) man on Earth. When I first read that years ago, I thought of Clark Kent, mild mannered reporter for the Daily Planet. If you blew on Clark too hard, he would fall down. That was my perception of 'meek.' The Hebrew word for *meek* or *humble* is עָנָו (*ah-nahv*) and means 'humble, meek, poor, afflicted.'⁹ The verb means, 'to be afflicted, depressed, humbled...to humble oneself before anyone...to submit oneself.'¹⁰ The animal pictured is an ox. Submitted to another, it carries a burden in being yoked. For the yoke is very heavy. Moses, above all the men on the face of the Earth, could bear a greater burden than anyone else. *The sins of Israel*. He was a perfect slave, fully submitted to God. He would plead for Israel's life many times, even though he had not sinned. Carrying one's own sin is heavy enough, but the sin of all Israel would have caused any other man to buckle under.

In yoking himself to God, he came to love Israel more than himself. He came to the proper relationship between Man and his Creator. He walked in absolute dependency upon Yahveh. Pride had been dealt with. Yahveh hates the proud¹¹ because they resist Him who is Life. Israel in the Wilderness would not submit, even though this was why Yahveh afflicted them; to humble them, to make them realize that 'Man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from Yahveh' (Dt. 8:3). God wanted Israel to be yoked

⁶ Sin causes pain; to God, to others, and to ourselves. We are either a slave to sin or to God. Imagine your son or daughter looking at a stick and saying, 'You are my father; you are my mother.' This is what Israel said to Yahveh when they made the gold calf and said, 'This is your God, Israel!' (Exodus 32:4, also v. 8)

⁷ The essence of marriage is oneness. 1st Cor. 10:1-2 says Israel was baptized into Moses. Baptism into Yeshua means that one dies to self and is alive unto newness of His Resurrected Life. He is the Groom and we the Bride.

⁸ Isaiah 53:12: 'Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great and He will divide the booty with the strong because *He poured out Himself to death* and was numbered with the transgressors, yet, He Himself bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors.'

⁹ Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, p. 606.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Prov. 16:5: 'Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Yahveh' (Is. 13:11; Hab. 2:4; Jm. 4:6).

to Him, but they would not submit.¹²

Yeshua declares, ‘Blessed are the *meek*, for they shall inherit the Earth.’¹³ Anyone who humbles himself to wait upon the Lord Yeshua, to serve Him, to become His slave, to yoke himself to Him, will possess the Land of Israel. The Promise to Father Abraham (Gen. 15:5-7).

The Messiah of Israel: God’s Slave

There are many parallels between Moses and Messiah Yeshua. They both had kings that wanted to murder them when they were infants.¹⁴ And they both literally radiated the Glory of Yahveh.¹⁵ Yeshua springs off the humility and respect that we Jews have for Moses when He says, ‘For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. (John 5:46). Yeshua lines Himself up with Moses’ inner quality of humility when He says in Matthew 11:28-30:

‘Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me*, for I am *meek* and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For *My Yoke is easy*, and *My Burden is light*.’

The Greek word for *meek* or *humble* is πρᾶνσ (prah-ous), the *exact* word that the Septuagint uses for Moses being the most humble man on Earth (Num. 12:3).¹⁶ If we really trust in Moses, as a faithful messenger or sent one of Yahveh, then we can certainly trust Messiah Yeshua. Our Rabbis spoke of the Suffering Slave (Servant) of Isaiah 53. This Slave would take upon Himself the sin of Israel (Is. 53:4-6). This is the Will of Yahveh for Messiah (Is. 53:10). Israel has been cleansed of Her sin through the Blood of the Messiah Yeshua, God’s Slave.

In the days of the Temple, whenever a rabbi had students (disciples), the students were said, ‘to be yoked’ to that rabbi. *Yeshua is calling you to become His student. To be yoked to Him.* To learn who He is. In ancient Israel, a young ox would always be yoked to a more mature ox and in this way, the mature ox would train the young one and lead it in a straight path. The mature would also take most of the burden. When you yoke yourself to Yeshua, you will find yourself becoming like Him, a humble slave: absolutely dependent upon God. Our sins are too heavy a burden for us.

Yeshua has given His Life for you.¹⁷ He loves you and extends to you forgiveness for your sins. *But you*

¹² Jeremiah 2:20: “For long ago I broke your yoke and tore off your bonds, but you said, ‘I will not serve!’” Israel yoking themselves to someone other than Yahveh is found throughout Scripture especially in Isaiah and Jeremiah.

¹³ Matthew 5:5. As David Stern has pointed out, ‘Earth’ should be ‘Land,’ as in ‘the Land of Israel.’ Yahveh gave us the land of Canaan. It was to be our inheritance (Exodus 6:8; etc.). Yeshua is talking to Jews who would understand both the allusion to Moses as humble, and therefore, pleasing to God, and Land as being the Land of Israel.

¹⁴ Pharaoh and Herod (Exodus 1:22 and Matthew 2:1-18, respectively).

¹⁵ Moses when he would come down from Mt. Sinai the second time and whenever he would go into the Tent (Exodus 33:7-11 and 34:29-35), and Yeshua, when He stood before Yahveh, Moses and Elijah on the Mt. of Transfiguration. Matthew 17:2 reads, ‘And He was transfigured before them and His face shone like the sun and His garments became as white as light.’

¹⁶ The Septuagint (the Hebrew Bible in Greek) was written by our Rabbis about 250 years before Yeshua was born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Now, I don’t believe for one minute that our Messiah spoke Greek to our people, but I also don’t believe that it’s a coincidence that the Septuagint records that word for Moses, too.

¹⁷ Yeshua is the Word that was made flesh (John 1:14), and as such, is what the Ten Commandments pictured. When Moses comes the first time with the Ten Commandments, the Word of God, he broke the Word of God because of Israel’s sin (Ex. 32:19). Yeshua was broken (crucified) the first time He came, also, for the sin of Israel. When Moses came the second time with the Ten Commandments, Moses radiated the Glory of Yahveh, which speaks of

have a choice to make. You can be like Moses, and yoke yourself to God, or you can be like Israel in the Wilderness, stubbornly refusing to yoke yourself to God's Messiah King.

God is calling you to Mt. Sinai. To willingly accept what Sinai means: 'thorn bush.' Yeshua had a Crown of Thorns forcefully placed upon His Head.¹⁸ He was humbled and afflicted to the point of a humiliating and painful Death (Is. 53:1-12). He did this for you. It is only through Yeshua's Blood that we are forgiven of our sins. Our God is humble and meek and we are to willingly accept the Way that our God has made for us. There is no other way. Ask Moses. He knew the Yoke of Yahveh. Tell God from your heart that you want to be yoked to Messiah Yeshua and to have your sins forgiven. Then you'll know why Moses was God's slave all the days of his life—gladly. Contact me and we'll talk about new life in Messiah Yeshua.

God's Word being eternal (Ex. 34:29). When Yeshua comes the Second time He will be arrayed in His glorious splendor and majesty (Mt. 25:31).

¹⁸ Matthew 27:29: "And after twisting together a crown of thorns they put it on His head and a reed in His right hand and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'"