



Holy Old Testament Books Authored by Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

"But since then there has not arisen in Israel, a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt before Pharaoh, before all the servants, and in all his land, and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel"
(Deuteronomy 34:10-12).

Moses, the Prophet, was born into the Levite tribe of the Israelite nation. His father was Amram and his mother Jochebed. Moses grew up during a time of turmoil when the Israelites were in bondage and slavery to a formidable Egyptian nation. Through years of harsh servitude, the Israelites had grown out of favor with God, forgotten their origin, adopted shared religious beliefs and worship of God, and were suspicious of all things they had been unaccustomed to. It was during such an era that a humble and reluctant leader named Moses had been destined for greatness.

The Lord God manifested Himself to Moses in the wilderness as a burning bush that was not consumed, and spoke directly to Moses saying,

"I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6).

Thus, Moses got in touch with the experience of the utmost fear; as he was afraid to look upon God. According to traditional belief at that time, it was fatal to look upon Divinity as it meant unequivocal death. *"You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live" (Exodus 33:20).*

Moses did not aspire to be a leader as he was far from being immediately motivated to do as God had asked him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, across the Sinai deserts into Canaan the Promised Land. Initially, Moses lacked ambition and determination. He did not believe he could be the one chosen for leadership role for the Hebrews to follow him; nor did he desire such a role; furthermore, it is not known whether Moses, as a young adult, showed any special interest in religious matters.

However, God did choose Moses, providing him with signs of Divine power, handing down to him the Ten Commandments from which was derived the Israelite Law named by scholars as the "Mosaic

Law". In addition, God the Almighty gave Moses Divine instruction, and appeared to him in the Tent of Meeting to give advice or hear prayers. In this way, God had shaped Moses for greatness; as it is clear greatness was not his ambition; nor was strong faith his asset. But Moses was loyal to his people and defended them in unjust situations as seen in two biblically recorded incidents: one being when he witnessed an Egyptian beat a Hebrew and the other when he intervened in a fight between two Israelites. Reared into wealth, education, and leisure of the Egyptian ruling class, he was not taught to defend the helpless; rather it was his gift that God would reveal to Moses in paramount proportions in His own time.

God both created a leader in Moses and formed unity within a nation in the desert. Moses proved to be a leader of a certain amount of intolerance to unfairness; and yet would put his people before himself. Moses taught the Israelites how to care for themselves. Rather than keeping the power and glory to himself, he appointed seventy elders and asked the Lord to appoint the next leader of the Israelite nation. It is to be speculated that the leadership appointment could have been one of ability rather than religious fervor; as the leader did not come from Aaronic priesthood.

However, in spite of all of Moses' great and inspiring accomplishments, he was not allowed to enter the promised land of Canaan. Moses never crossed the Jordan River banks to enter into the land flowing with milk and honey. For a man who, through Divine intervention, could predict plagues, part the Red Sea, witnessed manna rain from Heaven, delivered the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai, and could mold slaves into a devoted nation to God and the Law, Moses was still denied the promised land due to a single fit of disobedience.

Instead of speaking to a rock to produce water for the thirsty Israelite nation in the desert, Moses struck the rock twice. The consequences were severe and dire.

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them'" (Numbers 20:12).

Near death Moses again asked of the Lord to allow him to enter the promised land of Canaan. However, God refused to grant it.

"I pray let me cross over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.' But the Lord was angry with me on your

account and would not listen to me. So the Lord said to me, 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter. Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold it with your eyes for you shall not cross over this Jordan' (Deuteronomy 3:25-27).

Moses knew the Lord face to face, held the Ten Commandments in his hands written by the finger of God, and was buried by the Lord himself. Through divine inspiration, Moses the Prophet wrote five books: the first book of Moses—Genesis, the second book of Moses—Exodus, the third book of Moses—Leviticus, the fourth book of Moses—Numbers and the fifth book of Moses—Deuteronomy.

Genesis	Creation of the world, the first covenant with Adam and Eve, the Flood, and Abraham's descendants
---------	---

Exodus	Escape from Egypt, the Ten Commandments
--------	---

Leviticus	Holiness and Worship
-----------	----------------------

Numbers	Census, spies entering Canaan, Balaam, and
---------	--

Joshua assumes leadership
from Moses and prepares
the Israelites to enter
Canaan

Deuteronomy Moses the Prophet's
farewell speech before the
Israelites move toward and
into the land of Canaan

The Law Moses established through God became known as the Mosaic Law. Moses is mentioned in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament prophet, the Transfiguration with the Lord Jesus Christ talking to Moses and Elijah is recorded in three New Testament Holy Gospels.

While Moses' single display of disobedience prevented his entrance into the Promised Land, his greatness far outweighed his punishment; as it must have been intended by God. A leader by God's design, a law maker by God's will, and a sinner portrayed by his human weakness made known before the nation he led, Moses persevered to the end and his love to God never failed.

"It is neither the faith, nor the love, nor the hope,
nor the endurance of one day; Rather, 'he that

endures to the end will be saved..." St. Clement of Alexandria (c. 195).

Moses talked with God face to face and God knew Moses in person. Although Moses' punishment was not to enter into the Promised Land, perhaps with God, Moses was living its fulfillment long before he could reach it.

Bishop Youssef

Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Southern United States