

# Moses The Deliverer

The story of Moses is one of the most familiar stories in the Bible. If you ask people about it they can do a pretty good job of covering the basics: as a baby Moses was placed into the Nile river, where Pharaoh's daughter found him and then raised him as her child. One day Moses killed an Egyptian, and because of that he had to flee the country and live in the wilderness for the next 40 years. Then, when he was 80, God called him to go to Pharaoh and deliver Israel from bondage.

That is the story that we're familiar with – but that's not the story that Stephen told in the book of Acts. His version of the story was quite different:

**Acts 7:22:** “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, **he defended him, and avenged him** that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

25 **For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.**

26 And the next day he shewed himself **unto them** as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, **Who made thee a ruler and**

**a judge over us?**

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?

29 **Then fled Moses** at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.”

Stephen tells us that Moses did not just walk up to a random Egyptian and kill him in cold blood. Instead Moses was actually acting in defense of one of his people. This was not murder; in fact, according to verse 24, Moses was actually defending someone who was innocent.

Verse 25 tells us that *Moses was trying to deliver Israel*. Moses knew that God was going to use him to free the Israelites and he was actively trying to help them. The reason Moses had to flee the country is because *Israel rejected him*. When Moses saw two Israelites who were fighting each other he tried to stop the fight – and got yelled at for his trouble. “Who made you a ruler and judge over us?” When they used Moses’ defense of the Israelite *against him*, Moses was forced to flee. It was *Israel* who rejected Moses. It was *Israel* who told the Egyptians that Moses was guilty. *Israel* was the one who refused their deliverer and who tried to get Moses killed. Centuries later God would send Israel another deliverer named Jesus, and Israel would also reject and kill Him.

That, in fact, is Acts 7 in a nutshell: Israel hated and rejected the deliverer Moses, and they hated and rejected the deliverer Jesus. They treated Jesus the same way that they treated Moses and the prophets. Just as they told Moses “Who made you a judge over us?”, they also told Pontius Pilate “We have no king but Caesar”. The Pharisees kept saying “Moses this” and “Moses that”, but the truth is that Israel hated Moses:

**Acts 7:39: “To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,**

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.”

Israel would not obey Moses. They criticized him, attacked him, and made his life so awful that Moses actually asked God to kill him because he just couldn’t take it anymore (Numbers 11:15).

After Moses killed the Egyptian and fled for his life, Moses did not return to deliver Israel for another 40 years. When Moses finally brought them to Canaan, the entire nation actually rebelled and refused to enter the land. Things were so bad that Israel decided to *kill Moses* and return to Egypt (Numbers 14:10).

How did God punish them? By commanding Israel to wander around in the wilderness for *40 years* until that entire generation had died:

**Numbers 14:32:** “But as for you, **your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.**

33 And your children shall **wander in the wilderness forty years**, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.

34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.”

When Israel rejected Moses as their deliverer the first time and forced him to flee, Moses stayed away for 40 years. When Israel rejected Moses as their deliverer the second time and plotted to kill him, God commanded that they wander around in the wilderness for 40 years until they all dropped dead. In other words, there were *two* generations of Israelites who rejected Moses and who died for it.

What would have happened if Israel had not rebelled against God at the border of Canaan – or if they had not rejected Moses when he tried to deliver them the first time? There is really no way to tell, but history would certainly have played out differently. Their disobedience on both occasions had serious consequences. The nation of Israel might have reached the promised land two generations sooner if they had only obeyed God.