

## Why Did Moses Slay The Egyptian?

### Introduction

To get an understanding about the subject, lets look at some Scriptures.

#### **Exodus 2:11-15**

*“And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. [12] And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. [13] And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? [14] And he said, who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, surely this thing is known. [15] Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.”*

The purpose of this study is to understand why Moses killed the Egyptian.

### Josephus

In the writings of Josephus in **The Antiquities of the Jews in Book 2, Chapter 9, Section 3:**

*“A man whose name was Amram, one of the nobler sort of the Hebrews, was afraid for his whole nation, lest it should fail, by the want of young men to be brought up hereafter, and was very uneasy at it, his wife being then with child, and he knew not what to do. Hereupon he betook himself to prayer to God; and entreated him to have compassion on those men who had nowise transgressed the laws of his worship, and to afford them deliverance from the miseries they at that time endured, and to render abortive their enemies’ hopes of the destruction of their nation. Accordingly God had mercy on him, and was moved by his supplication. He stood by him in his sleep, and exhorted him not to despair of his future favors. He said further, that he did not forget their piety towards him, and would always reward them for it, as he had formerly granted his favor to their forefathers, and made them increase from a few to so great a multitude. He put him in mind, that when Abraham was come alone out of Mesopotamia into Canaan, he had been made happy, not only in other respects, but that when his wife was at first barren, she was afterwards by him enabled to conceive seed, and bare him sons. That he left to Ismael and to his posterity the country of Arabia; as also to his sons by Ketura, Troglodytis; and to Isaac, Canaan. That by my assistance, said he, he did great exploits in war, which, unless you be yourselves impious, you must still remember. As for Jacob, he became well known to strangers also, by the greatness of that prosperity in which he lived, and left to his sons, who came into Egypt with no more than seventy souls, while you are now become above six hundred thousand. Know therefore that I shall provide for*

*you all in common what is for your good, and particularly for thyself what shall make thee famous; for that child, out of dread of whose nativity the Egyptians have doomed the Israelite children to destruction, shall be this child of thine, and shall be concealed from those who watch to destroy him: and when he is brought up in a surprising way, he shall deliver the Hebrew nation from the distress they are under from the Egyptians. His memory shall be famous while the world lasts; and this not only among the Hebrews, but foreigners also:—all which shall be the effect of my favor to thee, and to thy posterity. He shall also have such a brother, that he shall himself obtain my priesthood, and his posterity shall have it after him to the end of the world.”*

Amram had imparted to his son the vision he had while in prayer and that was the basis of the interest he had in the situation.

Josephus seems to have had much completer copiers of the Pentateuch, and other authentic records now lost, about the birth and actions of Moses, than either our Hebrew, Samaritan, or Greek Bibles afford us, which enabled him to be so large and particular about him.

Also we see in the writing of **Josephus in The Antiquities of the Jews in Book 2, Chapter 9, and Section 7:**

*“Thermuthis therefore perceiving him to be so remarkable a child, adopted him for her son, having no child of her own. And when one time had carried Moses to her father, she showed him to him, and said she thought to make him her successor, if it should please God she should have no legitimate child of her own; and to him, “I have brought up a child who is of a divine form,<sup>21</sup> and of a generous mind; and as I have received him from the bounty of the river, in, I thought proper to adopt him my son, and the heir of thy kingdom.” And she had said this, she put the infant into her father’s hands: so he took him, and hugged him to his breast; and on his daughter’s account, in a pleasant way, put his diadem upon his head; but Moses threw it down to the ground, and, in a puerile mood, he wreathed it round, and trod upon his feet, which seemed to bring along with evil presage concerning the kingdom of Egypt. But when the sacred scribe saw this, (he was the person who foretold that his nativity would the dominion of that kingdom low,) he made a violent attempt to kill him; and crying out in a frightful manner, he said, “This, O king! this child is he of whom God foretold, that if we kill him we shall be in no danger; he himself affords an attestation to the prediction of the same thing, by his trampling upon thy government, and treading upon thy diadem. Take him, therefore, out of the way, and deliver the Egyptians from the fear they are in about him; and deprive the Hebrews of the hope they have of being encouraged by him.” But Thermuthis prevented him, and snatched the child away. And the king was not hasty to slay him, God himself, whose providence protected Moses, inclining the king to spare him. He was, therefore, educated with great care. So the Hebrews depended on him, and were of good hopes great things would be done by him; but the Egyptians were suspicious of what would follow such his education. Yet because, if Moses had been slain, there was no one, either akin or adopted, that had any oracle on his side for pretending to the crown of Egypt, and likely to be of greater advantage to them, they abstained from killing him.”*

We see in this account from early childhood, the attitude of Moses toward Egypt and toward its riches and pleasures.

There was a desire of the Egyptians to kill Moses, which Moses certainly had to have known about. There was also in the heart of Moses a desire to suffer afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of Egypt.

### **The Book of Jasher**

The Book of Jasher is not believed to be an inspired book, but is believed by some to be a historic book. In **The Book of Jasher, Chapter 71:2, 3:**

*“And when the man who was beaten saw Moses he ran to him for help.. and said to him; This Egyptian came to my house in the night, found me, and came to my wife in my presence and now seeks to take my life away. When Moses heard this thing, his anger was kindled against the Egyptian and he turned this way and the other and when he saw there was no man there, he smote the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.”*

[The Book of Jasher (1840) Reprint, Artisan Sales/Hoftman Printing, 1995]

The Book of Jasher says that the reason that Moses slew the Egyptian was that the Egyptian had a sexual relationship with the wife of this Hebrew slave while in his presence.

### **Acts 7:22-25**

*“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.”*

The Bible tells us that Moses slew the Egyptian to defend and to avenge the Hebrew that was oppressed by the Egyptian. The Bible also says that Moses did this to give the Hebrews deliverance. Moses thought that God was going to give the Hebrews deliverance by His own hand.

### **Hebrews 11: 24-27**

*“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; [25] Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; [26] Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. [27] By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”*

## **Conclusion**

May we learn from Moses that by running ahead of God; deliverance does not come from our hand, but by the hand of God. Looking at Moses typically, we see the mission of Christ to Israel, and their rejection of Him and refusal to have Him reign over them. Looking at Moses personally, we find that he, like others, made mistakes and displaced infirmities, sometimes went too fast and sometimes too slow. All this easily understood, and only tends to magnify the infinite grace and exhaustless patience of God. So why did Moses slay the Egyptian?

- *To avenge the Hebrew for what the Egyptian had done to his wife while in his presence.*
- *Moses thought that God was going to give the children of Israel deliverance by His hand.*
- *Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; he choose to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin.*
- *Moses accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.*