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Apostolic Leadership Archetype of Moses

by Matthew Kutz

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Moses is one of the purer models of apostolic ministry in the Old Testament. His life is a very good parallel of this ministry, he walked in divine favor, he had unique authority, had awesome revelation of God, received divine plans and blueprints, all of these marks of apostolic leadership. In fact, there are many more analogies of the apostolic that we could draw, but we cannot take the time to examine every aspect of his apostolic mission or call. So I will endeavor to only hit a relatively few of the highlights of Moses' ministry and how it shadows the apostolic.

Moses' history begins in troubled times under diverse circumstances. The Pharaoh has ordered that all sons of the Hebrew women be thrown into the river. Moses was to be killed, but God sovereignty intervened and saved Moses' life. From the very beginning he had a special mandate. Moses was found by Pharaoh's daughter, nursed by his own mother, and was raised in Egypt among the king's court as Pharaoh's grandson. Later Moses received his apostolic mandate directly from the Lord, during an encounter with the Lord at the burning bush. The Lord sent him to Egypt, to deliver the people and take them into their promised land (Exodus 3:10). Moses' unique story and adventure through Pharaoh's court can serve as a picture of several things, but I want to focus on the issue of divine favor.

DIVINE FAVOR

Often God will grant a season of favor upon those he has chosen to be impact leaders. It appears to me that this divine favor does not always last (as also demonstrated in Joseph's case, and David's case, which we will see later). Job experienced similar favor that was removed, for his testing, then later regained. Why does God allow seasons of favor, and then seem to remove that favor from a leader only to give it back again later in life? God allows these events to occur, but always they are for the refining and benefit of the leader. It builds a better leader, builds character, builds integrity and most importantly is teaches the leader to trust on God and to be easily moved by the Holy Spirit. This dependence upon God is important for all leaders, but is an

absolute essential quality for apostolic leaders. It is human nature to assume that success is result of our own efforts, so invariably God needs to allow His leaders to go through times of testing. I think, that the favor that comes at the beginning (or the call), can serve to build momentum for what God has next. Without that momentum, the testing of the Lord may be too great, but the Lord gives us pushes, plants a sense of destiny in our hearts, along the way to help us become "more than conquerors" through the training for leadership.

TRAINED IN MIDIAN

Pharaoh himself unwittingly spoils his own plan and saves out the very one that will later deliver the Israelites from Egypt's oppression. God has a great sense of irony and often will grant leaders favor among their enemy, at least for a season. Later Moses ruins or may have even sabotaged his favor in Pharaoh's court by killing an Egyptian and is forced to become a fugitive in the land of Midian. In Midian Moses becomes a faithful shepherd, is called, and ultimately sent, undoubtedly learning the necessary lessons for his future endeavors.

Midian is a unique place and brings many essential issues to the forefront. Midian means contention or quarreling¹. It was no accident that this is the place Moses ended up after he tried to save an Israelite via his own strength. It is apparent to me that perhaps Moses saw the struggle of the Hebrew people and wanted to do what he could to deliver them. But his strength only landed him in trouble and his inability to see God's plan landed him in his "*Midian experience*". I believe Moses argued and contended with God over the issue of the Israelites bondage. It is often the case with great leaders that they arise out of a place of discontent with the status quo or out of a place of sheer need or calamity. Moses wrestled with God over the issue of Israel's captivity, and his own calling, and was unprepared when the voice of God called him, and sent him to be the very solution he contended with God over.

Midian is a place in the life of every leader where you ask God, why? It is the place where you seem to quarrel with God, over issues that often end up being your life's calling. Moses went to Midian, because he had issues with God, and God was not about to let Moses continue to do things his way without correcting Moses' heart. Apostolic leaders in one way or another all experience their "Midian road", that is the place where God has to address attitude and behavior. Those called to be apostolic

leaders may see an injustice and are motivated to react. God does not need or want these kind of reactionary leaders, so he allows a contending, albeit only for a season, because God cannot be contended with. But the Lord allows these seasons in a leaders life so the realization of His design, and His plan, and His purpose can be born in their heart. Moses eventually left Midian, because he came to realize that it is no use arguing with God. God will always prevail so it is best to learn the lesson quickly so you can get on with what the Lord has planned. Moses' encounter with God at Midian resulted in his understanding of and submission to God's superior plan. This lesson proved to be invaluable as Moses would become the deliverer of the people.

THE VARIED EXPERIENCES OF MOSES

Moses' journey went from Pharaoh's grandson, to murderer, to shepherd, to deliverer, to leader and prophet. He was a reluctant leader, in fact he outright did not want the job, and when he finally did accept God's call in leadership he sometimes let his temper and frustration get the better of him. At times he complained against the very people God sent him to lead, "*So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me. . . I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me"*². Leadership is most definitely a journey of ups and downs, with both the good and the bad. Moses experienced both in his tenure as leader. He moved from place to place learning more about people, leadership, and God every step of the way. There were times, mentioned above, that the frustration of leadership seemed too great for him to handle, but there were other times when God wanted to kill the people and Moses stood before God on their behalf to save these same people, "*Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."* Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God . . . So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people"³. Moses experienced both the joy and pain of leadership. The unique role of the apostolic leader in this case is to assume both roles, the role of advocate for the people, and ruler over the people. These two different roles may seem difficult to marry together, but the successful leader must find a way to be both.

MOSES THE SHEPHERD & STRANGER

A fugitive often has a lot of time on their hands to think, to

reinvent themselves and to do a lot of self-searching. It was in his exiled state that Moses began to understand who he was and here he began to create a life. It was during his time of exile that Moses grew to maturity. He became a defender of the flocks, husband, father and a responsible shepherd. David Baron makes the statement that, "Exile created Moses, the leader.⁴" Moses was a stranger, in fact he named his first son Gershom, meaning stranger. Moses was alone, he felt what it was like to be captive to something he had no control over. This loneliness I believe motivated him to leave the beaten path of shepherding and his comfort zone to deliberately and intentionally "turn aside" and see the "great sight" God had for him in the burning bush.

Apostolic leaders all must go through a season of exile, self-searching, and personal discovery. The call of God is a serious one, and should not be taken lightly. I do not believe it was a total surprise to Moses when God said, you are the one going. He may have put up a fight and been a little reluctant, but I believe he had an inkling of an idea he might be God's chosen. Why else would the injustice of the Egyptian task master anger him so, he must have seen other task masters in Egypt beat slaves, he was raised as an Egyptian, he probably had his own slaves. The issue is there came a time when the injustice got to him and he felt he needed to do something about it. He must have relived this and often thought about what more could be done to relieve these people as he tended the sheep.

It was during this time of exile that Moses took to the job of shepherding. It is noteworthy that many of the Old Testament leaders who had a great impact came from the fields, or from a place of servanthood. Moses learned by shepherding, before God sent him to Egypt. Joseph was a servant of Potiphar and his jailer, David was a shepherd, Samuel served Eli in the temple, all of God's great apostolic leaders have backgrounds of service. No person from any walk of life can be great unless they are first and always a servant! Moses learned to serve and heed the voice of his father-in-law in the desert, as an undershepherd to Jethro. This proved valuable for it was later that Moses turned to Jethro for advice on how to rule and judge the people effectively.

A RELUCTANT LEADER

The Word makes specific mention that Moses "turned aside" and it was not until the Lord saw Moses, "turn aside" that He spoke to him from the bush. *"Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." So when the*

LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush...5. It is as if the Lord was waiting for Moses to do something. Often the Lord will require an effort on the part of his leaders that appears to be, on the surface, chasing something strange. This was a strange thing Moses saw and he wanted to know more about it, he could have continued with his duties, but he stopped to see what the Lord had. This is a lesson for apostolic leaders of today. You can go about the business of leading and managing and maybe see some success, But God has an experience waiting for you that will give clear direction, clear information and even spell out the future for you, but it comes by sacrifice, it comes by being willing to be interrupted by God. Being willing to be interrupted by God is all the difference between moderate success as a shepherd or fulfilling the apostolic commission that you were sent by God to do in your community.

There is more however to leadership success than simply turning aside, turning is only the first step. Moses had to answer the call after he turned. After Moses discovered what he was getting into, he became somewhat of a reluctant volunteer. Any leader worth their salt will experience a certain amount of fear and inadequacy at first. God can always work with a man or woman who is humble and dependent upon Him. Leaders must come to the place where God becomes the only source, He is the bread of life and no leader can offer anything of value to any person or people unless God has first captured their heart. The question is was Moses being humble or was he scared? Moses did not believe that he could lead the people; he made excuse after excuse, and asked God to send someone else more qualified. But God wanted Moses, He made Moses into a leader, He placed authority, power and influence in his hands and brought a faithful man along side him, his brother, to assist. Moses probably was just scared, but he later learned to be humble, in fact he was later known for his meekness. God can take reluctance and fear and change them into powerful attributes for success as a leader if you are willing to take the journey.

There are good leaders and then there are apostolic leaders. Apostolic leaders seem to come with a bit more authority, more wisdom, and a clearer vision. Apostolic leaders are the leaders of leaders. Moses was one of these apostolic leaders. Leaders naturally have a certain degree of ambition and drive, but it always tends to get in the way of God's plans, and seem to make it more difficult to reconcile the roles of servant and leader. Leaders with ambition, or their own ideas, are not necessarily bad

leaders, they just may require more work, and are more susceptible to God's intervention in regards to character, and humility. After Moses left Midian he knew that God's call was not a license to control or manipulate, he saw that kind of leadership in Egypt, and killed because of it. Originally Moses did not want to be the leader God had planned - he was, as my pastor, George Barrett puts it, "a reluctant leader", I believe because he had an idea of what the Lord might require of him. It is not that he did not want the hassle, or was not willing to serve or sacrifice, it is just he knew too much about the price of good leadership. In fact Moses' cry should be the cry of all leaders, Lord, if you do not go with us I'm not going.

REVELATION LEADS TO AUTHORITY

Moses was a friend of God; we can say that with certainty because the Bible says he was. He spoke with Him face-to-face. Like Adam, Moses also had divine communication with God. There is a realm authority that can only come from this kind of revelation. We have all heard the phrase, "knowledge is power", well that is true. Many men strive after the attainment of knowledge because the more you know the more power you have. Information unlocks doors, creates ideas and sets people apart. That is true in the science of leadership and that is why Dr. John Maxwell teaches that, "leaders are readers". However, in the arena of the spirit there is a different type of knowledge that leads to power and it is called revelation and it leads to authority. Attaining book knowledge and experience can be a great asset, but make no mistake, it is no substitute for being led by the Holy Spirit or knowing the Word of God. Apostolic leaders do not sacrifice Holy Spirit interaction or time in the Word, for theories, models or principles that can be attained from books. The precedent and primary focus must be given to pursuing God's plan and His purpose for the specific region or group of people God has sent you to.

Moses spoke with God face-to-face, that alone is awesome. I certainly would listen more closely to a man if I knew he spoke to God personally. Moses had encounters with God that few men experience and this fact contributed greatly to his authority and influence. People knew he was with God by the signs he performed and the countenance of his face. It seemed the Lord always revealed to Moses what he was going to do next before He did it. The Lord told Moses in advance about the plagues, their wilderness journey, the Red Sea, He received the divine instructions for the Tabernacle, he saw the entire Promised Land

with his eyes, before they entered in. It seems Moses' whole life God gave him a first look at His plans. God does not want His leaders to be in the dark, He intends for them to know where they are going and what is coming next. There are times when He requires leaders to walk by faith and put their trust in Him, but by in large I believe He wants to make His leaders aware of the next turn. He is waiting to communicate the future to His leaders if they are willing to listen, and turn aside from their plans and agenda. Moving in divine revelation is a better predictor of the future and instills greater authority than experience, or expertise ever could.

MOSES THE MANAGER AND LEADER

Moses marries together the job of manager and leader very well. Nehemiah also is an excellent example of a leader who learned to manage well, but Moses took an overwhelming task and made it manageable. Apostolic leaders understand the concept and inner workings of team dynamic, so much so that seemingly hard tasks are made easy by corporate effort. Mobilizing and empowering teams is clearly a distinguishing mark of the apostolic leader. Apostolic leaders find ways to delegate, while traditional leaders try to hold onto power and influence, causing all kinds of problems. An apostolic leader gets twice of the work done by disseminating authority.

Delegated authority is a key to apostolic leadership. The apostolic leader knows any authority he may have is God's and not their own or by their own efforts. In fact Jesus made it clear that the authority He had was from His Father (John 14:10; 16:13). The apostolic leader gives out authority generously because they know they themselves are recipients, and that their own efforts or grasping after authority only frustrates the destiny of God.

UNABAITED STRENGTH

*"Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished."*⁶ What other sign of God's favor and strength can there be, that after shepherding 40 years, leading and wondering for 40 years and being 120 years old having not lost any strength or vision? It is not uncommon for leaders, after years of service, to lose their vision and focus, not so with Moses. I believe that Moses not only kept his natural sight, but that he never lost his original vision of what God had in store for His people. Moses was able to maintain his strength because he always kept God's vision before his eyes. Moses did not allow the complaining and poor attitude

of the people to dissuade him from what he knew God showed him and I believe the Lord preserved him because of it.

Apostolic leaders who learn from their Midian experience, have learned that God will not be contented with, so what God says, He does. Leaders who have experienced this operate in a much higher level of faith. It is this faith, because of their experience with God that allows them to maintain focus and never lose sight of what God has revealed. Yes there may be times of doubt and frustration, but ultimately there is the knowledge that God is God and He will not be mocked. What he has revealed will come to pass, and for leaders who truly grasp this they not lose their vision or strength during the journey. God allowed Moses to see a great many things, and because he saw God, his vision never left him. The promise land eluded him because of his sin, but God allowed him the peace to know his legacy would be continued and his vision would be fulfilled through his servant Joshua.

THE LEGACY

Another mark of a true apostolic leader is the legacy they leave behind. Moses left a legacy in Joshua. Joshua finished what Moses started. Even though Moses could not enter the Promised Land, the people would and this was only possible because he was faithful to instill the same sense of vision and purpose that the Lord instilled in him to another. Moses' purpose was to get the people from slavery to the Promised Land. He was not able to do it physically, but through his legacy he did. It is unfortunate that not every leader leaves a legacy. But one of the marks of an apostolic leader that Moses modeled for us to learn from is the very fact that he left a legacy, and God's people did come into their proper place because of it.

Joshua was a man of purpose and could very well be a theme of his own chapter in this manuscript. Joshua had a sense of vision; he and Caleb were the only ones of twelve men who saw through God's eyes as they spied out their inheritance. There were two realities that laid before these two men: the giants, and their God. They chose to observe their God and ignore other physical reality. They saw as God saw. Moses was a man of vision and Joshua would not have taken God's people into the Promised Land if he was not bale to see, as Moses saw. Leaders today, must follow Moses' example and instill what has been given to them. Young leader must also be faithful to receive what is given and use what is given with their faith so that God's ultimate purpose can be accomplished.

MOSES AN APOSTLE OF UNIQUE DESIGN

Make no mistake Moses was an apostle; God said to him on the mount at the burning bush (Exodus 3:10,13) "I will send you," an apostle is one who is sent. Wayne Grudem in his book, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*⁷ reiterates my main thesis that Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles are if not one in the same, at least very similar in ministry and function. Even though the Bible calls Moses a prophet, and he surely was, by New Testament standards Moses was also an apostle. He proved to be patient, he moved in signs and wonders, he received the divine design and was architect of the tabernacle (wise master builder), he moved the people into their destiny, and he saw God. These are only some of the distinguishing facts of Moses' ministry that make him unique from other biblical figures and leaders. Moses was a shadow of the New Testament apostle and serves as a great model for apostles and leaders today.

Notes:

1. Strong's Concordance
2. NKJV, Numbers 11:11,14
3. NKJV, Exodus 32:10, 11a, 14
4. Baron, David. *Moses on Management*. Pocket Books 1999
5. NKJV, Exodus 3:3-4
6. NKJV, Deuteronomy 34:7 7. Grudem, Wayne. *The Gift of Prophecy*. Cross Way Books 2000. Dr. Grudem makes a strong case that the counterpart of the Old Testament prophet was not the New Testament prophet rather their counterpart was the New Testament apostle.



Matthew Kutz is the Administrative Director for the Foundation Stone Christian Center. He has produced an audiocassette teaching series entitled "Team Ministry in the Local Church" and "Principles of Leadership." Matthew has written several curriculum manuals for FSCC and TriNet School of Ministry. He and his wife, Angela, live in Toledo, OH.



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