

Exodus 2:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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 (וַיַּגְדֵּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-אָבִיו וַיַּרְא בְּסַבְלָתָם) marks Moses' transition from prince to deliverer. **Went out unto his brethren**—Moses identifies with the oppressed, not oppressors (Hebrews 11:24-26). **Looked on their burdens** (וַיַּרְא בְּסַבְלָתָם) echoes God's later "I have surely seen" (3:7). **Spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew**—the verb "smiting" (נִקְהָ, nakah) describes violent beating. Moses' intervention (v. 12) shows zeal for justice but premature, self-dependent action.

Historical Context

Stephen's sermon (Acts 7:23-25) explains Moses' intention: "he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not." Moses' royal status made this inspection possible but also isolated him from his people's trust. His 40 years in Egypt prepared him culturally; his next 40 years in Midian would prepare him spiritually.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' choice to identify with his oppressed brethren challenge you to align with the suffering rather than the powerful?
2. What does Moses' premature action teach about the difference between godly zeal and self-directed impatience?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי	וְיֹאמֶר	בְּמִן	בְּמִן	בְּמִן	וְיֹאמֶר	מֵשֶׁה
H1961	And it came to pass in those days	H3117		H1992	was grown	when Moses
				H1431		H4872
וְיֹאמֶר	אֵל	מִאֱחָיוֹ	וַיַּרְא	בְּסִבְלַת	מִן	
that he went out	H413	one of his brethren	H251	and he spied	on their burdens	H5450
H3318				H7200		
וְיֹאמֶר	אֵשׁ	מִצְרַיִם	מִקְהָה	אִישׁ	עַבְרֵי	מִאֱחָיוֹ
and he spied	H376	an Egyptian	H4713	smiting	H5221	an Hebrew
H7200				H376	H5680	one of his brethren
						H251

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 1:11 (Parallel theme): Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

Matthew 11:28 (Parallel theme): Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Isaiah 58:6 (Parallel theme): Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Exodus 3:7 (References Egypt): And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

Luke 4:18 (Parallel theme): The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

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