

Moses Was a Very Cruel Man

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Moses Was a Very Meek Man (Numbers 12:3)

Moses Was a Very Cruel Man (Numbers 31:15, 17)

God mentions the strengths and weaknesses of many individuals who are recorded in His word (see study: Faults, Foibles, and Idiosyncrasies). For instance, the Bible records that David wrestled and killed both a lion and a bear in 1Samuel 17:34-37. On the other hand, God did not ignore David's second-degree murder of Uriah the Hittite (2Samuel 12:9). So, the Bible does not whitewash man's weaknesses and sins. However, it is balanced because growth in character that often occurs over the span of someone's life is also included. For instance, Abram did not trust God in his early life, so he lied about his wife Sarai and said that she was his sister in order to reduce the likelihood he might be killed by a foreign ruler (Genesis 12:19; 20:2; 26:7-9). However, much later in his life Abraham grew to trust God to the point he was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac, when commanded to do so by God (Genesis 22:1-12). These examples need to be considered when viewing the life of Moses, and caution should be exercised when commenting on Moses' character, especially given the fact we are all weak and prone to sin.

Moses' opinion of himself was very low, and there are many examples of this,

Then Moses said to the Lord, 'O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue (cannot talk very well)' (Exodus 4:10; Ed. note in parenthesis; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Moses did not view himself as a great leader and preferred to let someone else take the lead.

But he (Moses) said, 'O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send' (Exodus 4:13; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As God knows the inner motives of everyone, He confirmed that Moses was a meek person.

Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3).

The real issue is that many people confuse being meek with being weak, which is a mistake. An individual like Moses can be very meek and yet very strong when it comes to doing what he believes is right. Being meek means being teachable and having a repentant attitude when sins or errors are exposed. Also, someone who is meek will not be grasping for power or notoriety like Korah attempted to do.

Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; ²and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. ³They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, 'You take too much (assume too much) upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?' (Numbers 16:1-3; Ed. note in parenthesis).

As mentioned previously, Moses didn't want a leadership role but God decided he was going to be the human instrument responsible for assembling and leading Israel out of Egypt. Therefore, Korah's accusation that Moses was trying to exalt himself was false and God does not take false accusations lightly.

And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them (Korah and those who followed his rebellion) up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. ³³So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the congregation (Numbers 16:32-33; Ed. note in parenthesis).

When Lucifer grasped for power, he too was expelled from the congregation of Almighty God and now dwells in darkness awaiting his final judgment (cf. Isaiah 14:12-15). In contrast, Jesus Christ was meek and never grasped for power as the next scripture states.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself of no reputation (humbled himself), taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:5-6; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Because many people confuse meek with being weak, painters and sculptors have portrayed Christ as being weak and effeminate, which is false. He looked no different than any other Jew of his day and did not stand out in a crowd, which made it easier for him to avoid being arrested by the Jewish religious leaders (cf. John 10:39). As Christ was a carpenter, he would have been strong and in good health. Carpentry in the Middle East during the time of Christ involved more than cutting wood and using it to build various structures. Handling and shaping heavy stone was an integral part of being a carpenter, and it would not be an occupation for someone who was weak and effeminate. Although Christ is meek, he is not weak and this is confirmed in the next scripture describing Christ's future battle against Satan and the fallen host.

He (Christ) was clothed with a robe dipped in blood. And his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed him on white horses. ¹⁵Now out of his (Christ's) mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should strike the nations. And he himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶And he has on his robe and on his thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:13-15; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So, both Moses and Christ were meek, and yet neither exhibited weakness when it came to doing what was right. Therefore, those who accuse Moses of being cruel will also accuse Christ of being cruel. Such is the case with the next section of scripture dealing with Moses following the command of his spiritual leader, who was Jesus Christ (cf. 1Corinthians 10:4).

And Moses said to them: 'Have you kept all the women alive? ¹⁶Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. ¹⁷Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known a man intimately (Numbers 31:15- 17).

Moses did the same that his leader Jesus Christ had done earlier when dealing with the same sinful actions.

Then Israel remained in Acacia Grove (Heb. Shittim), and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. ²They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. ³So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel. ⁴Then

the Lord said to Moses, 'Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the Lord, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel (Numbers 25:1-4; cf. 25:5-11; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, those who falsely accuse Moses of being a cruel man are on the same path as Korah and his followers (see study: Which god Is a Megalomaniacal, Sadomasochistic, Malevolent Bully?). Moses was like Jesus Christ in the sense that he was meek and yet strong when it came to doing what was in accordance with God's will. So, no contradiction exists between the scriptures used in the heading of this study. Instead, those who make these claims do not understand God's nature or the serious consequence of sin, which is everlasting death as described in God's word (1John 3:4; cf. Romans 6:23). Nor do they understand that someone can be very meek without being weak when it comes to obeying what God commands.

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