

Show Me Your Glory

Lessons from the Life of Moses

Lesson 1 Exodus 1–2

Introduction

Hebrew immigrant at birth; Prince of Egypt; shepherd of Midian; deliverer of God's people—Moses was the prominent figure in God's plan to call forth a nation of followers who would serve and worship Him. Moses' life story begins on the pages of the book named for the greatest act of deliverance by God recorded in the annals of human history—the *Exodus!*

The epoch account of the Exodus has been referred to as the *prequel* to the Bible story of salvation. The term *exodus* indicates a *going out* or a *departure*. It is the historical account of Israel's redemption from bondage and their pilgrimage to freedom and the Promised Land. The events recorded in the Bible point to a pivotal time in Israel's birth as a nation when they walked out of slavery in Egypt and into a covenant relationship with the living God. As His chosen people they grew from a mere seventy individuals arriving in Egypt during Joseph's time, to a thriving nation of approximately three million strong, and who at just the right moment in time, were brought forth to be divinely delivered, protected, and provided for as they learned to walk by faith.

A basic understanding of how God's people wound up on Egyptian foreign soil will help us appreciate their plight and God's miraculous intervention on their behalf. The prelude to Exodus begins toward the end of the Book of Genesis, where Joseph, a naive Jewish teenager who aroused the envy of his brothers is sold into a slave caravan bound for Egypt. Through the passing of time and a series of astonishing events, God blessed Joseph mightily, allowing him to be raised to the position of prime minister to Pharaoh. God gave him wisdom and insight beyond his years, enabling him to solve the problems facing the nation. When a terrible famine overtook the land, God warned Joseph it was coming and he made preparations to deal with it. However, the same wasn't true of Joseph's family back in Canaan. Several of his brothers traveled to Egypt in search of food and, eventually, the family was reunited, joining Joseph in Egypt. His descendants remained in Egypt for nearly four hundred years, farming their crops and raising their flocks and herds.

As time passed, a new Pharaoh came to power who knew nothing of Joseph and the good he did for the Egyptian people (Exodus 1:8). Concern developed that the Israelites were growing in such numbers they might ultimately outnumber the Egyptians! The native population came to view the Israelite foreigners with great suspicion, and prejudice began to spread. The Egyptians inflicted great hardships on the Hebrews in the hope of crushing them; but at the same time, God was at work orchestrating circumstances in such a way as to bring about His own purpose. The time was right for God to bring forth the man who would lead His nation of people to the land where they would worship Him . . . that man was *Moses*.

Day One:

Setting the Scene

Read Exodus 1–2.

1. Pick out the descriptive words that help to illustrate the following . . .
 - a. How the children of Israel got along in Egypt. vv. 1–7
 - b. What life became like for those under the rule of a pharaoh who no longer knew of Joseph’s contribution to Egypt. vv. 8–14

Pharaoh’s own fears prompted him to futilely attempt to curtail the Israelite population growth. In an effort to keep Egypt within his control he tried to crush the spirit of God’s people by placing them in rigorous bondage; but the harsher the taskmasters became, the more the Israelites seemed to prosper.

2. Briefly describe Pharaoh’s next attempt in vv. 15–16.
3. How did the midwives respond to Pharaoh’s command? Why? vv. 17–21

These Hebrew midwives had the right perspective: they feared God more than they feared the king of Egypt!

4. How did God reward the faithfulness of the midwives? vv. 20–21
5. Describe Pharaoh’s last desperate attempt to destroy the future Israelite nation. v. 22

The word *feared* in verse 17 comes from the root word *yare* (yaw–ray), meaning to fear or have reverence for. It is the same word used in Genesis 22:12 when God prevented Abraham from slaying his son Isaac: “. . . *Now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.*” It is this same awesome reverence for God that enables *you*—like Abraham—to do the impossible!

Up Close & Personal

Are you dealing with the impossible right now? Is your fear of your circumstances such that it is becoming an obstacle in your relationship with God? If so, your fear of *it* is greater than your fear for *Him*. Take a few minutes to allow Him to minister to you through the verses below. Write them out using your own words.

- Proverbs 8:13

- Proverbs 9:10

- Proverbs 10:27

- Proverbs 14:27

- Which verse encourages you today? How?

The Bible says, “*The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy*” (Psalm 147:11). Will you put your hope in Him?

Selah . . . (Complete this portion of the lesson on any day you choose.)

Fill in the blanks below that are applicable to you: i.e. something that you would like to discuss in group or perhaps further investigate on your own.

- For group discussion: _____

- For further study: _____

Heartbeat . . . (Memory verse) “*And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.*” Exodus 2:25

Day Two:

God Has a Plan

“Our moment in history and our unique, individual circumstances become the anvil upon which our character is beaten out and formed. We will either rise to the challenge of our times, or we will remain stuck on the sidelines.” (C. R. Swindoll)

What to look for . . .

Pharaoh had issued a murderous edict to snuff out the life of every newborn male Hebrew child, but God had a plan that would allow the infant Moses to survive. His plan involved the willing participation of family members whose faith transcended their fears. The same is true today: God’s providential plan still involves using men, women, and children who are willing to act in faith while they wait in hope.

Read Exodus 2:1–10 along with Acts 7:17–22.

1. What are the simple facts regarding Moses’ origin revealed in verses 1–2?

2. In Numbers 26:59 we are given the names of Moses’ immediate family; who were they?

3. According to Exodus 2:2 and Hebrews 11:23, what prompted Moses’ parents to hide him for three months?
 - Briefly explain the plan that was implemented to save baby Moses. vv. 3–4

Think about it for a moment: in order to save her baby, Jochebed had to place him in the very location where Hebrew boys had received their death sentence—the Nile River! It was the last place any mother would take her baby, unless she was acting upon her faith in God to save him. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for *ark* in verse 3 is the same word used in Genesis 6, referring to the ark that saved Noah and his family from the destruction of the flood. Moses was safer there than in his own mother’s arms!

4. What was the reaction of Pharaoh’s daughter in finding the child? vv. 5–6
 - Who was keeping an eye on baby Moses from afar to see what would happen? What offer did she make to Pharaoh’s daughter? See vv. 4 and 7.

Consider the beautiful irony of this scene as Jochebed willingly relinquished her son by faith, only to have him placed once again back into her loving arms and, in addition, received wages for nursing him. Who but God could orchestrate such a blessing!

5. In time the child was taken to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. What is the meaning of his given name *Moses*? v. 10

- Why do *you* think Pharaoh's daughter defied her father's edict?

6. Moses was approximately three years old when he went to live in the palace. According to Acts 7:21–22, what do you learn about his training during these early years in Pharaoh's household?

- **Challenge:** Contrast Moses' learning "*in all the ways of the Egyptians*" with the training he received during those three years at home with his family.

- **Personal:** Fulfilling God's plan came at great cost to Moses' mother. What is the most costly thing *you* have ever had to do for God? Please explain.

Your usefulness to God is dependent upon your willingness to obey His lead at any given moment. Are you following His lead right now or are you perhaps telling Him which way you will go and what you are willing to do next?

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Three: Timing Is Everything

What to look for . . .

If you have ever failed at your attempt to serve God, today you will see that you are not alone. In fact, the Bible states that there are many who have gone before and failed; we have only to learn from their example in Scripture.

Read Exodus 2:11–25 along with Acts 7:23–29.

Somehow during the years Moses was being raised as a member of the Egyptian royal family he was also able to develop an identity with his Hebrew roots. Year after year he must have witnessed first hand the cruelty imposed upon his people. These experiences would leave a lasting impression and lead him to one day take action.

1. What motivated Moses to take matters into his own hands?
 vv. 11–14
 - a. Thinking his actions went unnoticed, the next day when Moses tried to break up a fight between two Hebrews what happened?

 - b. What prompted Moses to flee to Midian? v. 15

2. **Personal:** What is your initial response when confronted by unfair or unjust treatment? How would you compare your response to that of Moses?

Moses escaped Pharaoh's wrath by fleeing to the desert and taking refuge by a well.

3. Who came to the well and how did Moses assist them? vv. 16–17

These grateful women reported the good deed to their father who in turn invited Moses to remain with them. In time Moses married one of the daughters, Zipporah, who bore him two sons; the first named Gershom, meaning *banishment, or one who was driven forth*. (Moses second son was Eliezer, meaning *God is a helper*.)

For the first time in his life, Moses was a stranger in a foreign land, separated from everything and everyone familiar to him from birth. It was perhaps at this point that he began to discern God's call to a deeper purpose for his life.

Meanwhile, the cries of the suffering Hebrews were going up to God night and day and God heard their groaning, and remembered His covenant.

4. What had God promised His people? See Genesis 46:3–4a.

God was bound to His people by His covenant promise, and He does not break His promises, nor does He forget about them! God heard their cries of groaning, He remembered His covenant, He looked upon His children, and He acknowledged them (Exodus 2:24–25). The word *acknowledged* literally means He took notice of them.

5. Did Moses need to take matters into his own hands? State your reasons.

Even with the best of intentions when we hastily intervene where God has not asked us to go, our actions can bring about disastrous results for others as well as ourselves. We must learn to make the choices that will allow faith to overrule impulsiveness.

6. What does God promise in Romans 8:28?

If you have attempted to act on God's behalf in a situation and you have failed, you can see that you are not alone; in fact, you're in very good company. Moses, with much training in God's school of obedience, became one of God's greatest servants. Does that help you to appreciate your potential? Look at Acts 7:30 to see the amount of time God spent preparing His servant to serve.

Failure is one of the key elements God uses to implement our spiritual growth and help us learn to depend upon Him and not on self. Miles J. Stanford said that *"our personal and heartbreaking failure in every phase of our Christian life is our Father's preparation for His success on our behalf."*

God is just as much in a covenant relationship with His people today as He was with the nation of Israel. Beware, because the enemy would have you believe that God doesn't know or care about what you are going through; he will try to convince you that you are on your own. However, we have only to look at the Cross for the proof that God was willing to pay the ultimate price so that we can be with Him forever!

Look again at Exodus 2:24–25; but this time put your name in the space provided:
"So God heard _____'s groaning, and God remembered His covenant with _____. And God looked upon _____, and God acknowledged _____."

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Four:

What about Faith?

“Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1

Imagine yourself in the position of Moses’ parents: Pharaoh’s edict to kill all the male Hebrew babies was in effect. God had already blessed you with two children—a son and a daughter—and you find that you are expecting a third child. You wonder whether it will be a girl or a boy; will it live or will it be snatched out of your arms? The uncertainty of the future would overshadow your joy of the present. As difficult as it was, we’re told that Amram and Jochebed believed God and waited in faith for Him to act.

Enclosed in Hebrews 11 is a beautiful passage of Scripture that reveals the faith of these two parents that was also taught to their children, including young Moses while he lived in their home. *“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command”* (Hebrews 11:23). God had supernaturally given to these two believing parents a revelation that allowed them to recognize that their son was destined for a special purpose. During the first three years of Moses’ life, the foundation of faith was laid in his heart.

1. Turn to Hebrews 11 and read verses 23–29. Record what you learn about the faith of Moses in each of the following verses:
 - v. 24
 - v. 25
 - v. 26
 - v. 27
 - v. 28
 - v.29
2. Summarize your findings about Moses’ faith in one sentence.
3. Examine yourself: Moses chose to turn away from the things of this world and turn toward the things of God. If your name was mentioned in Scripture, would it be linked with faith? What would be said of you?

You'll notice in reading through Hebrews 11 that the author attributes faith in Christ to Moses. He believed what God said and acted on it, looking forward to the reward that was yet to come.

We see in the study of Moses' life God's choice for a deliverer; we will also see illustrations and typology pertaining to mankind's true Deliverer, Jesus Christ.

Optional Challenge: Are you up for a challenge? As you have opportunity this week, look up the references below and jot down the spiritual characteristics Moses and Christ have in common.

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|------------------|-------|---------------|
| a. Numbers 12:3 | _____ | Matthew 11:29 |
| b. Acts 7:22 | _____ | Mark 6:2 |
| c. Exodus 3:1 | _____ | John 10:11 |
| d. Psalm 99:6 | _____ | Hebrews 7:24 |
| e. Psalm 105:26 | _____ | Matthew 12:18 |
| f. Exodus 33:7-9 | _____ | 1 Timothy 2:5 |
| g. Acts 7:35 | _____ | 1 Thess. 1:10 |

Moses and Christ experienced obscurity at birth; both were in great peril in infancy; both were provided protection in Egypt; both left positions of honor to become humble before men; both suffered rejection at the hands of men. Moses delivered God's people through the blood of a lamb; Christ delivered mankind on the Cross by shedding His blood as the Lamb of God.

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Five:

Praying with Purpose

Selah . . . Be still and consider how to *work out* in your daily life what God has *worked into* your heart through your study of His Word. Then pray each aspect through.

❖ **A Point Pondered:** Is there an example from the lesson or a truth from Scripture that has taken on a new meaning this week? Please note it below.

❖ **A Path Pursued:** Knowledge must be applied in order to make a difference. Name one thing can you act upon in obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading.

❖ **A Promised Possessed:** If God has spoken a particular verse or word of hope to your heart, write it down and pray it back to Him.

❖ **A Praise Proclaimed:** God loves to hear you praise Him! What aspect of God's character particularly blessed you this week? Will you praise Him today?

❖ **A Prayer Presented:** Write out the most pressing request on your heart and lift it to the Lord.

Other requests:

Notes