



THE EXODUS PART ONE:
THE CALL OF DELIVERANCE
INTO THE WORD
LESSON 10

- WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS LESSON:
 - Hebrew slavery in Egypt (c. 1570-1550 BC)
 - The birth of Moses (c. 1525 BC)
 - The call of Moses (c. 1445 BC)
- BIBLICAL THEMES:
 - The promise and plan of deliverance
 - The making of a leader
- WORLD EVENTS:
 - 1700 BC - Joseph in Egypt; 16th & 17th Egyptian Dynasty
 - 1600 BC - Hittites conquer Babylon
 - 1570-1550 BC - 18th Egyptian Dynasty; Egyptian Empire (New Kingdom) oppressed all Semitic people living in Nile Delta
 - 1550 BC - Hyksos ruler driven out of Egypt
- SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES:
 - Exodus 2-3
- FOR FURTHER STUDY:
 - Damazio, Frank. The Making of a Leader. Oregon: City Christian Publishing, 1988.

INTO THE WORD

LESSON 10

THE EXODUS PART ONE: THE CALL OF DELIVERANCE

Introduction:

The story of the Exodus¹, God's miraculous delivery of the Israelite people from slavery and bondage in Egypt under the leadership of Moses, is one of the most remarkable stories of the Old Testament. The powerful and lasting image of Moses facing the Red Sea with his rod lifted toward heaven, as the waves part before him and allow the Israelites to leave Egypt forever and begin their journey toward nationhood and the Promised Land, has captured our imaginations for centuries. Truly, this magnificent story of deliverance functions as the "gospel" or the "good news" of the Old Testament. This is the story that will go before the Israelite nation as they travel toward the promised land; this is the story that causes the surrounding pagan nations to fear the God of Israel.

Rich in typology and significance, the book of Exodus documents how God makes for Himself a nation and a people, while simultaneously shaping and molding individuals. We see God's mighty demonstration of power over Pharaoh as He displays his glory and judgment through the plagues that descend upon Egypt. We see the foreshadowing of the death, burial, resurrection and redemptive power of Jesus Christ, the sinless lamb of God, as the death angel passes over the blood-covered door posts of the Israelite homes in the final, dramatic execution of God's judgment over Egypt. We witness the severing from bondage as the waves of the Red Sea come crashing down on Pharaoh and his armies, silencing forever the voices of their oppressors. And just as we are raised in newness of life as we come out of the waters of baptism (Romans 6:4), so the Israelite people, once slaves to Egypt, become a new nation and new people.

Before the book of Exodus draws to a close, the Israelites are given a civic, moral, and ceremonial law, and the tabernacle (God's first dwelling place among his people) is completed. In the final verses of this particular chapter of Israel's history, the glory of the Lord fills the tabernacle and the presence of the Lord, manifested in the cloud and the fire, is visible to all the house of Israel (Exodus 40:34-38).

Although this is a story of epic proportions, the scripture does not hide the failings of its heroes and the foolishness and disbelief of the people of Israel. We are moved by the very real fear of Moses as God asks him to lead His people out from under Pharaoh's hand, and we recognize ourselves in the negative attitudes and disobedient behavior among the Israelites.

¹ Exodus - a movement away; a departure, usually a large number of people.

The book of Exodus, then, offers us a pattern of our New Testament salvation experience, provides an in-depth look at the life of a Godly leader in the figure of Moses, dramatizes the consequences of disobedience to God's word and purpose by a "stiff-necked people", and powerfully demonstrates the majestic delivering power of a loving God who seeks to dwell and fellowship with his people.

Into the Word:

1. How did we get here? - From Favor to Slavery

The previous lesson ended with Jacob and all his substance traveling to the land of Egypt to avoid famine and starvation. Well cared for under the leadership of Joseph, the nation of Israel prospered and multiplied in their new home. However, as generations came and went, and the Israelites continued to flourish, the first chapter of Exodus states that "there arose up a new King over Egypt", who did not "know" Joseph (Ex.1:8). Clearly much time had passed since Jacob had settled in Egypt that the memory of Joseph's leadership and his counsel to Pharaoh was forgotten by the Egyptian government.

The new Pharaoh acknowledged that the Hebrews had become larger in number and substance than the Egyptians themselves, and he became fearful that they might join with invading nations to overthrow Egypt. Consequently, the new pharaoh commanded that "taskmasters" be appointed over them and he placed them into slavery. The Israelites endured hard labor and were treated extremely harshly. The Hebrews entered into generations of slavery.

Despite their great oppression and affliction, the Hebrews continued to multiply over generations. Confounded by the sustained growth of this slave population, harsher steps were taken to decrease their growth, and the Hebrew midwives were instructed by the current Pharaoh to kill every newborn male Hebrew child upon delivery (Exodus 1:15-16). The midwives, however, fearing God refused to do as the Pharaoh commanded, claiming that the strength of the Hebrew women meant that they delivered their children so quickly that they could not arrive in time to do as Pharaoh had commanded (Exodus 1: 17). God blessed the Hebrew midwives, and the Hebrew population continued to rapidly increase.



Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- Why do you think that the Hebrews continued to multiply and flourish even under slavery?
- Why do you think God blessed the midwives?
- What lesson can we learn from the midwives' fear of the Lord in the midst of intimidation?
- Why do you think God allowed the Hebrews to fall into slavery?

2. The Birth of Deliverance: Moses and his forty years in Egypt

After generations of slavery, we can speculate that the Hebrews dreamed of freedom. Amid their dark days of oppression, there still lingered the faint hope of deliverance. Surely Hebrew parents had told their children the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and about their God, who had promised they would be a great nation and possess the land. Surely one day a deliverer would come?

As Pharaoh continued in his persecution of the Hebrews, the decree came that all male Hebrew infants would be thrown into the Nile River (Exodus 1: 22). Such a decree must have made the Hebrew nation despair of ever breaking free of their bondage. Who would deliver them if all males were to be destroyed? Would they remain in bondage forever? What of the promises of God?

Moses was born during the time of this decree. After his birth, his parents hid him for three months. When it was no longer possible to hide him, his mother made an ark of bulrushes and placed him at the edge of the river. Having done all she could do to prevent his death, she then placed him into the hands of Providence.

His sister, Miriam watched the baby from a distance as he began to float down the river. That day, the daughter of pharaoh came to the river to bathe:

- Exodus 2:1-10 (NLT)

¹About this time, a man and woman from the tribe of Levi got married. ²The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She saw that he was a special baby and kept him hidden for three months. ³But when she could no longer hide him, she got a basket made of papyrus reeds and waterproofed it with tar and pitch. She put the baby in the basket and laid it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile River. ⁴The baby's sister then stood at a distance, watching to see what would happen to him. ⁵Soon Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe in the river, and her attendants walked along the riverbank. When the princess saw the basket among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it for her. ⁶When the princess opened it, she saw the baby. The little boy was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This must be one of the Hebrew children," she said. ⁷Then the baby's sister approached the princess. "Should I go and find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" she asked. ⁸"Yes, do!" the princess replied. So the girl went and called the baby's mother. ⁹"Take this baby and nurse him for me," the princess told the baby's mother. "I will pay you for your help." So the woman took her baby home and nursed him. ¹⁰Later, when the boy was older, his mother brought him back to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him as her own son. The princess named him Moses, ^[a] for she explained, "I lifted him out of the water."

Significantly, the same river that was supposed to be his destruction became his salvation.



Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- In what way does the river Nile, that was supposed to destroy Moses, become the very thing that saves him?
- Do you see a pattern here? Consider the story of Joseph being thrown into slavery.

The circumstances of Moses' birth demonstrate God's sovereignty and His ability to use Satan's own weapons against him. The most powerful demonstration of this principle is manifested on Calvary's cross (1 Corinthians 2:8). In the time of the greatest persecution against the Hebrews, God preserved Moses, the one who would deliver his people from slavery. Similarly, when Satan thought he had defeated Jesus in death, the resurrection power of the Christ brought redemption for all. God has a plan for deliverance.

Not only was Moses pulled from the river and placed under the care of Pharaoh's daughter to be raised as a privileged Egyptian, but his own mother, Jochabed, (thanks to the ingenuity of his sister, Miriam, the young girl who had watched her brother float down the Nile and be taken out of the water by the Egyptian princess and suggested to her that the baby would need a wet-nurse) was hired as his nurse and was able to spend hours with her own son! God's plan was more than enough!

It is probable that Jochabed took the opportunity to whisper in the ear of her infant son and tell him about the God of the Hebrews. Raised as he was in the palace of Pharaoh, Moses was Egyptian in manner and speech, but Israelite in heart. It is important to raise our children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6)!



Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- How do you think that Pharaoh's daughter knew that Moses was Hebrew?
- Do you see any relationship between the story of Moses in the ark of bulrushes and Noah? (Consider the scripture: 1 Peter 3:20)

Moses grew into a young man and went out among the Hebrew slaves, his people. He witnessed their extreme hardship and how poorly they were treated by their taskmasters. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave. A strong tide of emotion must have risen up inside him. These were his people. Moses looked to see if anyone was around, and on seeing no one, struck and killed the Egyptian taskmaster (Exodus 3:11-12).

In killing the Egyptian, Moses had made a choice; he had chosen to be identified with the Hebrews and suffer in their affliction. Perhaps he felt the spirit of deliverance rise up within him and expected to be treated as a hero among the Hebrews. Things, however, did not turn out in the way he had perhaps planned:

When Moses tried to arbitrate between the two fighting Hebrews, he was met with disgust. They did not trust him; nor did they regard Moses as one of them. Their response to him also alerted Moses to the fact that his murder of the Egyptian taskmaster was known among the people. As the scripture indicates, Moses became afraid. Soon pharaoh became aware of what Moses had done, and his crime warranted death. Moses had tried to deliver the Hebrews in his own way:

- Acts 7:25-28 (NLT)
²⁵ Moses assumed his fellow Israelites would realize that God had sent him to rescue them, but they didn't. ²⁶ "The next day he visited them again and saw two men of Israel fighting. He tried to be a peacemaker. 'Men,' he said, 'you are brothers. Why are you fighting each other?'" ²⁷ "But the man in the wrong pushed Moses aside. 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?' he asked. ²⁸ 'Are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?'"

After Moses murdered the Egyptian, he fled to the wilderness. It was here, on the back side of the desert that Moses was to spend the next 40 years of his life. God uses these forty years to break and mold Moses into submission to His plan of deliverance. If we are going to be used of God, we must allow God to shape and mold us. Even Jesus prayed as a man, "not my will but thine be done."
(Luke 22:42)



Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- Are there any examples in your own life when you have pursued your "own way"? What was the result?
- Why is it important for us to allow God to fulfill his purpose for us and not do it our way?
- Identify a time in your life when you have felt on "the back side of the desert". As you look back, do you see God's molding hand at work in your life?

3. Lessons in the Desert: Forty Years Shepherding in Midian

When Moses fled to the desert, he came upon Midianite shepherdesses attempting to water their flock. He saw them draw water from the well and fill the drinking troughs for their animals to drink. While Moses watched, some shepherds attempted to drive the women away, but Moses intervened and drove the shepherds away (Exodus 2: 16-17). Moses clearly had a strong sense of justice. Ultimately God was able to use this natural trait, but first it had to be thoroughly refined and fashioned for the master's use.



Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- Why is it important that we offer our gifts and talents back to God?

Moses' act of kindness caused the father of the shepherdesses, Jethro, to offer him a home and one of his daughters, Zipporah, as a wife. Moses began his life as a shepherd.



Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- In what ways might shepherding prepare one for leadership?
- How do you think the second forty years of Moses' life differed from the first 40. What do you think Moses gleaned from his first 40 years?
- How do you think God used this 80 years in combination to prepare Moses for his destiny?

4. The Call of Moses

It probably seemed like just another day to Moses as he lead his flock to the west side of the desert and came to Mount Horeb. Surely nothing could have prepared him for what was to happen next:

- Exodus 3:1-10 (NLT)
¹One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai, the mountain of God. ²There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. ³"This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it." ⁴When the LORD saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!" "Here I am!" Moses replied. ⁵"Do not come any closer," the LORD warned. "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. ⁶I am the God of your

father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God. ⁷ Then the LORD told him, “I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. ⁹ Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. ¹⁰ Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.”

God spoke to Moses out of the bush and told Moses he had heard the cries of His people and would use Moses to deliver them from bondage, and lead them to the Promised Land. God hears our cries for help, and while it is Satan’s plan to keep us in bondage to sin, it is God’s plan to bring us into His kingdom (Romans 14:17).

As Moses responds to God's calling, he expresses doubt and concern for his lack of ability. Moses seems a very changed man from the Egyptian noble he once was, rashly killing the Egyptian taksmaster. The Lord assures him of His help and tells Moses he will send Aaron his brother to be his spokesman. The following table compares Moses’ objections to God’s calling, and God’s responses to Moses.

Who am I? <i>Exodus 3:11</i>	I will be with thee <i>Exodus 3:12</i>
I don't know thy name <i>Exodus 3:13</i>	I AM THAT I AM <i>Exodus 3:14-15</i>
They won't believe <i>Exodus 4:1</i>	I will give you a sign <i>Exodus 4:2-10</i>
I'm not eloquent, slow of speech <i>Exodus 4:10</i>	I will be thy mouth <i>Exodus 4:11-12</i>
Not me! <i>Exodus 4:13</i>	I will send you Aaron <i>Exodus 4:14</i>

God meets all of Moses’ needs. Amid the weakness of Moses, God lends His strength. Moses then asks God, “What shall I say is your name?” God gives the answer, “I AM THAT I AM.”

- Exodus 3:13-15 (NLT)

¹³ But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?” ¹⁴ God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.” ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all generations.

In this powerful response we see the foreshadowing of the same mighty delivering God revealed in the New Testament as Jesus Christ. Jesus is the I AM as he delivers humanity once and for all out of the slavery of sin (John 8:56-59).



Scripture Reading Response and Analysis

- Why do you think that Moses is so reluctant to receive his calling?
- Is Moses more teachable now?
- Have you ever felt the call of God on your life? How does this call make you feel?

Conclusion:

God is clearly preparing Moses for the great task ahead in the first 80 years of his life. God miraculously saved Moses from certain death as an infant and placed him in great privilege. Perhaps these years in the palace gave him the leadership and boldness he would need to lead a people; yet it was crucial that Moses also learned to care for his flock in the deserts of Midian, and to fully rely on God for his calling to lead the people of Israel. As we will see in the next lesson, when the moment of deliverance comes, it comes quickly as God swiftly delivers Israel out of their 400 years of slavery. However, godly character and leadership take time to develop in the life of a man or woman of God. God is interested in building His character in your life. Whatever your calling, he has a specific plan and purpose for your life, if you will let Him shape and mold you through the circumstances He allows in your life.