

Moses

Learning to Lead

Marilyn Kunz & Catherine Schell

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Exodus 2—3:12

Call to Leadership

During the four centuries since Jacob and his family entered Egypt to escape famine, their Hebrew descendants have multiplied and prospered in the Nile delta. A change of dynasties in Egypt brings about the change noted in Exodus 1:8—a Pharaoh who considers the Hebrew people a security risk in their location on Egypt’s northern frontier. As part of Egypt’s plan to build storage cities in that area, the Hebrews are pressed into forced labor under ruthless taskmasters. Simultaneously, the Pharaoh orders Hebrew midwives to destroy all male children at birth.

What would be your feelings if you were an expectant parent living in the time and place described in Exodus 1?

In preparation for this discussion, read Exodus 1—3:12 before you go through the guide questions.

Read Exodus 2:1-25

1. How is the infant Moses rescued?

2. Moses' awareness of his Hebrew ancestry and his faith in the true God must come from the first years of his life when his own mother is his nurse. What privileges and opportunities would belong to the child growing up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter? See Acts 7:21-22.

3. With whom does Moses really identify?

What concerns does he have?

4. How is Moses' attempt at leadership among his own people received?

How do you account for this early rejection of Moses' leadership? For the New Testament comment on this incident, see Acts 7:23-29.

5. Why does Moses flee? Consider what his attempt to defend his own people has cost him.

6. What demonstrates Moses' continuing attitude toward oppression and injustice (verses 17, 19)?

7. What strengths and weaknesses does Moses display in this chapter?

8. What is God's attitude toward the condition of the Hebrews (verses 23-25)?

Look at the four verbs describing God's awareness of their situation. What has enabled you to realize these attributes of God in a difficult situation, even when you were tempted to doubt that he cares?

Read Exodus 3:1-12

9. Describe the changes in Moses' life since he fled from Egypt. What luxuries, leisure, and cultural opportunities had he probably enjoyed in Egypt?

What would a shepherd's life be like?

How would both experiences, the life of a prince and the life of a nomad shepherd, prepare Moses for the task of delivering Israel?

10. What purpose does the flaming bush serve?

What does Moses learn about God in verses 2-6?

How does this affect Moses?

11. What is Moses' response to the detailed expression of God's concerns and purposes in verses 7-10?

What major emphasis has Moses missed in the LORD's statements in verses 8 and 12?

12. What is God's answer to Moses' sense of inadequacy?

SUMMARY

1. In what ways would Moses' background prepare him for leadership?

2. In chapter 2, Moses is apparently not yet ready to deliver his people. What does he need to learn about himself, about others, and about the LORD?

3. How does the LORD view oppression?

For what reasons and to what purpose are the Israelites to be freed from their bondage in Egypt?

If you are a Christian, for what purpose have you been delivered from slavery to sin? See 1 Peter 2:9, 15-16.

CONCLUSION

God's preparation of Moses for leadership takes a long time. It includes a wide range of experiences—early childhood training by his Hebrew mother, education in the cultured Egyptian court as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, rejection by his own people in his first attempt to deliver them, flight to escape death, and years of herding sheep in the wilderness. Finally, the LORD reveals himself to Moses as the God of his forefathers who cares about the plight of his people. Then he calls him to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. Sending Moses to the Pharaoh, God promises to be with him.

PRAYER

O Lord, you preserved and called your servant Moses to deliver your people from slavery. In our time of injustice and insecurity, we long for your liberating acts. Today, a widening gulf separates rich and poor societies and nations. Terrorism spreads more terror. Communities seem caught in an unending cycle of violence. We ask you to raise up wise and godly leaders for our time. Show us how you want us to live. Help each of us to walk daily in obedience to you. We ask these things that your name may be honored. Amen.

