

Men's Sunday Night
A Study in the Book of Exodus
Lesson 1 - Exodus 1-2
Journey to Freedom
Birth Pains

Chapter One

The bondage of Israel in Egypt had been predicted in Gen. 15:13–16. The fourth generation would be equal to 400 years, since Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. The Jews went down to Egypt and lived in the best of the land, but this luxury later turned into trial and suffering. How like the path of the lost sinner today; sin promises pleasure and freedom, but it brings sorrow and bondage.

The king's plan now to kill all the male babies would have met with great success except for the intervention of God. We also see in this chapter, Satan's attempt to bring the people of God into bondage. Verse 1 calls the Jews "*the Children of Israel*" and Israel means "a prince with God." The prince of the world (Satan) defying the prince with God! But God's people are not of this world and will be delivered from Satan's bondage!

Chapter Two

It seemed as though God was doing nothing. The Jews prayed and cried out for help and wondered where God's deliverance was. During these years, God was preparing his people, but He was also waiting in mercy and giving the wicked nations of Canaan time to repent. God is never in a hurry, He had His leader chosen for the Hebrews and was preparing him for his mighty task.

Moses was forty years old when he made his great decision to leave the palace and become the deliverer of Israel. His life is divided into three equal periods: forty years as a prince in Egypt; forty years as a shepherd in Midian; and forty years as leader of Israel. Moses spent forty years as a faithful servant in Midian, and here God prepared him for the difficult tasks that lay ahead.

Whenever God works, He chooses the right worker, uses the right plan, and acts at the right time. Moses was taking care of a few sheep; soon he would be shepherding a whole nation. The shepherd's crook would be exchanged for the rod of power, and he would be used of God to help create a mighty nation. Because he was faithful to do the humble job of shepherding, God used him to accomplish greater tasks as liberator, lawgiver, and leader.

Read Exodus 1:1-22 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. What were the names of the 12 sons of Jacob?

2. Over the span of 400 years, Jacob and his twelve sons and their wives all died. What happened to their descendants who were left in Egypt?

3. What was the new Pharaoh afraid of? What did the rulers of Egypt decide to do?

4. What shrewd tasks did Pharaoh implement in his attempt to control the growth of the Hebrew people? What were the results of these measures? (See Ex. 1:11-22)

5. Why did the descendants of Jacob flourish even though they were treated badly? What does that tell you about God?

6. How did God protect the descendants of Jacob? We are told in Exodus 1:21 that the Hebrew "*midwives feared God*" (Ex.1:21). How did their actions show it and how did God reward them?

Read Exodus 2:1-25 and Answer the Following Questions:

7. Exodus 2 gives details of a baby son (Moses) being born to a son of Levi. Throughout the Bible we see an importance placed on the genealogy of the children of Israel. Why do you think this genealogy is so important?
8. What did Moses' mother do to try to save her baby?
9. What part did Moses' mother play in his childhood? What part did Pharaoh's daughter play?
10. How did Moses try to demonstrate his commitment to his own people? Did he accomplish it? (See Ex. 2:11-14)
11. Moses lived with the Midianites for forty years before God put into motion His next plan for his life. He became a shepherd. How was this great training for what was coming next? Who else in the Bible trained for leadership as a shepherd?
12. What action did the people of God finally take which opened the doors for Him to act?

The Value of Preparation

Have you ever felt as if you've been spending your life ready for something important, but have never quite arrived at doing it? Perhaps you're a college or graduate student, an apprentice, an entry-level employee, or a junior executive. You may feel impatient and frustrated in a lower level of responsibility, wondering whether your life is stuck in a permanent holding pattern. "Not Yet!"

If so, you might benefit from considering the example of Moses and several other people in the Bible. They illustrate the value of preparation and the truth that God never wastes a person's time. He is always leading toward a purpose, if we are willing to be led.

Joseph had God given abilities in leadership and management, as well as wisdom to interpret dreams. But he spent several years as a household servant and an unjustly sentenced inmate in prison before being given responsibility as Pharaoh's second in command.

Moses spent two thirds of his life being shaped for the last third. During the first third, he was growing up in Egypt, where Scripture tells us he was learning "all the wisdom of the Egyptians" and becoming "mighty in words and deeds." Apparently, Moses thought that this training and experience was enough to qualify him for leadership of his people, the Israelites. But this first attempt at taking charge ended in disaster. He was not yet ready to assume the responsibilities that God had in mind for him.

Daniel submitted to a course of study which included "the language and literature of the Chaldeans." As a Hebrew, he probably found much of this curriculum to be opposed to his upbringing. Yet he experienced it without succumbing to the pagan Babylonian culture. Over the years he rose higher and higher in the government, until he was advising the kings of empires.

No matter where you are in life, God has purpose and direction for you. Right now, things may seem slow, perhaps even boring. But as a follower of Christ, you have reason to make today count. Today is the foundation on which tomorrow will be built. What a tragedy it would be if, when opportunity knocked, you were found unprepared to accept it because you had squandered the time of preparation.