



7

God Calls Moses

Key Themes

- God is sovereign over all things.
- God uses people to accomplish His perfect plans.

Key Passages

- Exodus 2:1–10, 3:1–22

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify examples of God's sovereignty shown through the life of Moses.
- Describe the attributes of God we see in this account.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Write on the board, "Does God use imperfect people to accomplish His plans?" Have students use bookmarks to mark Exodus 2:1 and Exodus 3:1 in their Bibles.



Studying God's Word

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Moses was born at the time of Israel's bondage in Egypt. After being raised in Pharaoh's household, Moses fled Egypt, fearing for his life. While living in Midian, Moses was called by God to free His chosen people. Despite his shortcomings, Moses was used by God to accomplish His plans.

Study the Prepare to Share section.

Go Before the Throne.



Activity: Shortcomings

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Students will look at the five instances where Moses rejected God's call to free the Israelites and the response he got from God. They will see God's provision in Moses's life and then examine their own misgivings about God using them to accomplish His will in their lives.

Student Guides

Pencils



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

As you prepare to teach this week, let God's Word prepare your heart and your mind as you read Exodus 1–4.

"There arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph" (Exodus 1:6–8). And so begins this exciting account of God's people, the Israelites, finally making their way out of Egypt after hundreds of years of slavery and bondage. As the Israelites continued to be fruitful and multiply, the new Pharaoh became increasingly jealous and intimidated by them. He enslaved them and purposed to make their lives miserable with hard work—in the hopes of reducing their growing population (Exodus 1:11–14).

But in spite of the terrible treatment, they continued to grow in numbers—their families were getting larger, not smaller as Pharaoh had hoped. In an even more desperate move to decrease their numbers, Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill all the male children born to the Israelites. But this did not work either because the midwives feared God (Exodus 1:15–21). In one last attempt to reduce the number of Israelites, Pharaoh ordered that all male Hebrew babies should be cast into the river and killed (Exodus 1:22).

Into this political climate, Moses was born. A male Hebrew baby—destined for destruction yet preserved by a sovereign God to fulfill a promise of deliverance made hundreds of years earlier. His mother tried desperately to hide him, and when she could no longer do so she placed him in an "ark" on the river, where he was providentially discovered by Pharaoh's daughter and brought into his court to live as royalty (Exodus 2:1–10).

Moses was raised in Pharaoh's court until he was 40 years old (Acts 7:23). But Moses had not forgotten his people. When he saw an Egyptian beating a

Hebrew, one of his brethren, he took matters into his own hands and killed the Egyptian. This required that Moses flee from Egypt for his life. He settled in Midian, where he met Reuel, later called Jethro, and took one of his daughters, Zipporah, as his wife (Exodus 2:11–21).

It was in Midian that God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and called him to lead His people from Egypt. In this encounter, God allows us a glimpse into His character and attributes. God is holy (Exodus 3:5); God is faithful (Exodus 3:6); God is omniscient (Exodus 3:7); God is sovereign (Exodus 3:8); God is merciful (Exodus 3:9); God is omnipresent (Exodus 3:12); God is eternal (Exodus 3:14). Moses witnessed these truths of God and more during his meeting with God.

Yet Moses was still reluctant to obey (Exodus 4:10–13). This reluctance kindled the anger of the Lord, and Aaron was commissioned to serve as spokesperson and declare the words of God as given to Moses (Exodus 4:14–16).

This account of Moses allows us to delight in the faithfulness and sovereignty of God to fulfill His perfect plans through history. And He accomplishes His purposes through imperfect people in spite of their objections and shortcomings.

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

The sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt is often disputed by skeptics, saying that there is no evidence for so many slaves in Egypt, or a mass exodus of more than 2 million people. This lack of evidence is based on the standard chronology of Egyptian history, which dates the time of Moses and the Exodus to around 1250 BC. However, the biblical timeline indicates that Moses left Egypt about 1491 BC, nearly 200 years earlier! This discrepancy alone would account for the lack of evidence—as archaeologists and researchers

have dismissed newer evidence, saying it couldn't have been remnants of the Hebrews in Egypt because the dates are wrong.

The timeline discrepancy is in part a result of miscounting the reigning years of the Egyptian kings. The kings of Egypt often overlapped in their reigns—much like the kings of Israel and Judah did later (1 Kings). These overlaps have not been taken into consideration with the traditional Egyptian timeline.

Exciting developments by archaeologist David Rohl and others are correcting this error. Mr. Rohl has researched and produced a new timeline that considers the Egyptian kings who did in fact overlap in their reigns—this, of course, affects the entire Egyptian timeline. Based on this updated research, the biblical dates for the Exodus now conform to the Egyptian dates.

And more than that, new evidence is now confirming the biblical account. In fact, excavations that began in 1966 from Tell ed-Daba in the Egyptian eastern delta indicate that a large Semitic-speaking population, most likely the Hebrews of the Exodus, lived there during the 13th Dynasty. This is perfectly in line with the understanding that Moses was born during the reign of Amenemhet III, last Pharaoh of the 12th Dynasty, who reigned for 46 years. This Pharaoh had no sons to inherit his throne, which could explain why he might accept Moses as the future heir.

As God allows for more discoveries to be made, we must keep in mind that our authority is the Bible. His Word is final. We do not base what we believe on what has been “proven” by men but on what has been spoken by the holy, sovereign, infallible, and inerrant Creator of the universe.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After Joseph died, the new king over Egypt was jealous of the Israelites and enslaved them to hard

labor (Exodus 1:8–14). This was no surprise to God. Scripture records that it was more than 400 years earlier when God told Abram that his descendants would one day be strangers in a land where they would serve and be afflicted (Genesis 15:13). God also revealed to Abram that the Israelites would come out of that oppression with great possessions (Genesis 15:14)—which is exactly what happened when the Israelites finally left Egypt (Exodus 12:35–36).

When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, He identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 3:6)—He was declaring to Moses that He was the same God, fulfilling the same covenant to give His people the Promised Land. The promises made to Abram so many years ago were about to be fulfilled as Moses led God's people to the Promised Land.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Sovereign Lord, thank you for bringing me to a saving knowledge of your Word and your gospel. Thank you for each student you have placed in my class. As we study your Word, open my eyes and the eyes of these students to trust the faithfulness of your sovereignty in all circumstances. Give us confidence that you can use us, in spite of our weaknesses, to fulfill your perfect plan. Give all of us the courage and wisdom, dear Lord, to willingly obey you and follow you wherever you may lead.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.



Review

Over the past few weeks we have been looking at the description of the Israelites in Egypt. Tracing backward, God had told Abraham that his offspring would be in bondage in Egypt and led out at the time appointed by God. The promise to inherit the land of Canaan was still to be fulfilled and now was the time.

Joseph had been sold into Egypt and all of Israel's children came to Egypt where they had grown to be plentiful in the land after Joseph had become the second in

command under Pharaoh. Throughout these accounts, we have seen God's guiding hand in taking Joseph to Egypt, making him prosper in Potiphar's house, landing him in prison, blessing him in prison, and placing him in command over all of Egypt.

We know that God is a faithful Creator and that He will fulfill His promises. We are about to look at how He provided deliverance for the Children of Israel through Moses.



► Write on the board, "Does God use imperfect people to accomplish His plans?"



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Let's read Exodus 2:1–10 together to see how God began the deliverance of the Israelites. *Divide the passage for members of the class to read aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.

- ? **What kind of literature is this passage?** *Historical narrative.*
- ? **When did these events take place?** *About 1571 BC, 136 years after the sons of Jacob arrived in Egypt, and 64 years after the death of Joseph. Refer to the Seven C's of History Timeline.*
- ? **What challenges were the Israelites facing at this time?** *They were enslaved under the new Pharaoh who did not know about Joseph, and their male babies were being killed.*
- ? **What did the couple who were married in the passage have in common?** *They were both of the house of Levi.*
- ? **Why did the woman hide her son from the Egyptians?** *He was beautiful and he would have been killed by the Egyptians.*
- ? **How did she respond to her situation?** *She placed the baby in a waterproofed basket (ark) and placed it in the reeds in the river.*

Exodus 2:1–10

► Students should turn to page 51 in their Student Guides.

- ? **Who followed the basket down the river?** *No one! The text doesn't say that the basket moved down the river, but that the sister was watching as Pharaoh's daughter and the maids walked along the river.*
- ? **How did the daughter of Pharaoh respond to the basket in the river?** *She had her maids fetch it and had compassion on the crying baby.*
- ? **What did the sister, who is named Miriam (Exodus 15:20), propose to the princess?** *She asked if she should find a nurse for the baby.*
- ? **Who did God arrange to take care of Moses while he was so little?** *His very own mother!*
- ? **What did the princess offer to the mother of Moses?** *She offered to pay her for nursing him and then to bring him to be raised.*

➤ Often, the images in our minds from movies and other illustrations influence our understanding of the text.

God arranged everything so Moses would know his family and know that he was a Hebrew, an Israelite—one of God's people.

- ? **How did Moses get his name?** *The princess gave it to him to signify that he was "drawn out" of the river.*

Discover the Truth

In spite of the command to murder their baby, Moses's parents kept him alive and hidden for three months. On top of that, they had evaded the Egyptians who were to throw every male baby into the river. As Moses's mother set him in the small basket, or ark, she was placing his future in God's hands.

In popular renderings of this passage, the small ark is often shown careening through rapids and crocodiles only to float into a tranquil cove where the princess is bathing. However, this should remind us that it is important to look to the text to understand what actually happened. It makes for great drama, but it never actually happened.

If this daughter of Pharaoh was indeed Sobeknefru, as we mentioned last week, she was the only child of Pharaoh Amenemhet. She may have been at the sacred Nile River bathing in the waters as a fertility ritual. The Egyptian god Hapi was the god of the river and she may have seen the baby in the basket as a gift from her god.

- ? **How should we understand her discovery of the baby?** *The one true God had guided the circumstances so that Moses was discovered by the princess.*
- ? **Knowing the rest of the story, what attribute of God do we clearly see in these events?** *God is sovereign over these events and He provided a way for Moses to be kept alive so that God could use him to deliver the Israelites. It was no coincidence, or the actions of a false god, that brought Moses into the household of Pharaoh—God was guiding each person and orchestrating the events.*



READ THE WORD

Moses was taken into the household of Pharaoh at a young age. We have no details about the life he experienced up to age 40. In verse 11 in Exodus 2 the events pick up “when Moses was grown.” We actually get the age of Moses from Acts 7:23–24 when Stephen is recounting the history of the Messiah to the Jewish council.

Moses went out one day and saw his brethren under their burden of slavery. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. He then fled as Pharaoh sought to kill him. In Hebrews 11:24–26, we learn that Moses’s ultimate motive was to “suffer affliction with the people of God” rather than “enjoy the passing pleasures of sin” as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.

Moses traveled across the Sinai Peninsula to the land of Midian. There he found favor with Reuel (also called Jethro) and married his daughter Zipporah. They had a son and Moses became a shepherd. We pick up the events in the text 40 years later, when Moses is 80 and tending his father-in-law’s flocks near mount Horeb.

Exodus 3:1–22

Let’s read all of Exodus 3 together to understand God’s call of Moses to free the Israelites. *Divide the passage for students to read the passage aloud or use a recording and have the students follow along.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Now that we have read the text, let’s take some time to observe what it is saying to us. This process is an important part of understanding what God’s Word is telling us.

Observe the Text

- ? Who appeared to Moses? *The Angel of the Lord.*
- ? How did the Lord appear? *From within the flames of a bush that was not being consumed by the fire.*
- ? Why did God tell Moses to remove his sandals? *Because he was on holy ground.*
- ? How did God identify Himself to Moses? *As the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*
- ? What did God tell Moses He was going to do? *He had heard the cries of the Israelites and was going to send Moses to deliver them from bondage in Egypt.*
- ? What objection did Moses give in verse 11? *Moses told God that he was not significant enough to perform the task God had given him.*
- ? What objection did Moses give in verse 13? *He suggested that the Israelite leaders could not accept him coming in the name of God.*
- ? What name did God tell Moses to present to the Israelites? *“I Am Who I Am” and “I Am.”*

- ? **What promise did God affirm in this passage?** *God told Moses to tell the Israelite elders that God would release them from bondage and fulfill the promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them the Promised Land of Canaan.*
- ? **God told Moses of two things that would happen during the events of the Exodus. How would Pharaoh respond to God's command to release the Israelites?** *Pharaoh would not release the Israelites.*
- ? **What additional information does Exodus 4:21 give about the certainty of this event?** *God said that He would harden Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the Israelites go free.*
- ? **What did God tell Moses will also happen as the Israelites left Egypt?** *The Egyptians would give them their riches as they left and the Israelites would take that wealth with them.*

Discover the Truth

Moses had just had an encounter with the God who created the universe. We are going to think about what Moses experienced, and what God has revealed about His character.

God commanded Moses to remove the sandals from his feet because he was in the presence of a holy God.

- ? **What does it mean for God to be holy?** *Refer to the Attributes of God poster. Discuss the idea that God's holiness refers to His perfect moral character—He cannot sin and He hates the sin present in His creation.*

As God revealed Himself to Moses, He told Moses that He was the God of his fathers—God is still the same God who appeared to Moses's ancestors. This attribute of God is called His immutability. If you think about the word *mutation*, you think of something changing. So if God is immutable, then He does not change. God's character is permanent and absolute. God sometimes changes His course of action, but His nature never changes.

God also referred to Himself as "I Am." God declared His eternality and His self-existence in the name I Am and a similar form translated LORD in verse 15. These come from the Hebrew YHWH, which is also translated as Jehovah as a name of God.

- ? **What does it mean that God is eternal?** *God is not bound by time, but exists outside of time. He existed as the Godhead before He created the universe and time began. This also means that He is the definition of existence and that nothing could have caused Him—He is the ultimate cause of everything.*

Two more attributes are clearly seen in this passage. God already knew what was going to happen after He sent Moses to Egypt. He told Moses how the elders would respond to his words and how Pharaoh would react to the command of God. God knows everything—past, present, future—and we call this His omniscience. The word comes from *omni*, meaning "all" and *science*, meaning "knowledge." God has all knowledge!

HOLY

IMMUTABLE

ETERNAL

OMNISCIENT

SOVEREIGN

Looking ahead to Chapter 4, God demonstrated His power and authority over His creation by performing various signs through Moses. He turned a staff into a snake and made Moses's hand leprous. These same signs were to be shown to the people in Egypt as confirmation of Moses's prophetic office.

We also see God's sovereignty over man in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. It is clear from the text that Pharaoh would reject God's authority and that God assured Moses that God's plans would come to pass. God was in control of what was about to come to pass as He would lead the people out of their bondage.



Shortcomings

MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

? Do any of you have any shortcomings that would keep you from leading millions of people out of a foreign land? *Allow for answers.*

Moses thought the same thing—he didn't think he was capable of leading this group of people in opposition to Pharaoh. He was absolutely right! I want you to work in small groups to examine the five objections Moses offered to God and how God responded to him. Then I want you to consider what shortcomings you might see in your own life as you seek to serve God and His people, and then pray for one another.

Have the students work through the Shortcomings section in their Student Guides and, at the appropriate time, have them pray for one another in their groups—that God would be their strength as they serve Him.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

? How did God respond to the objections Moses raised? *God reassured Moses that He would be in control of the situation. In Exodus 4:14, God was angry with Moses and reinforced that His plans would come to pass.*

Moses demonstrated that he really did not trust that God could do what He said He would do. I am sure that there are times when each of you feels inadequate to accomplish a task that you know you are called to perform.

Perhaps share a personal testimony about a time when you have had to rely on God to do what He has called you to.

If we are honest, we are incapable of doing these things apart from God empowering us to do so. It is through the gifts of the Spirit and the talents we have been given that we can accomplish what God has called us to. We must humbly recognize our inadequacy and find our strength in Christ. As Jesus told His disciples in John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

As we have moved through the first 80 years in the life of Moses, we have seen God's sovereign hand guiding him from his birth. God protected him from the death warrant issued by Pharaoh, and even brought him to be raised in Pharaoh's own household.

Despite Moses's sin of murdering the Egyptian, God allowed him to escape to Midian, where Moses found refuge and a wife and family. Moses was far from a perfect man, but we can look at his life and find hope for our own. The guiding hand of God is evident and we can trust that the same God who was leading Moses will lead us.

Secondly, Moses is an example of God using imperfect people to accomplish His plans. In fact, if God only used perfect people to do His work, He wouldn't get anything done! It should give us great encouragement to know that the same God who could change a staff into a snake, cause plagues to devastate a nation, and part a sea is at work in the lives of each of His children.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? How could you use what we learned from the text today to help train others to be discerning when they watch media depicting biblical accounts? (Consider, specifically, the animated film *The Prince of Egypt* and the *Ten Commandments* movie and their distortions of biblical history.) *These films often put things out of historical context with the Israelite slaves building the pyramids at Giza and the Sphinx. Moses is often shown floating down a treacherous river before being found. These offer opportunities to teach people how to make sure they are looking to Scripture to understand the events properly and develop biblical discernment.*
- ? People often wonder who made God. What did we learn about God today that can help us answer that question? *God revealed Himself to Moses as I Am. God is eternal. He was not created, but has created all things. God could not be omnipotent or sovereign if He had been created by someone else. He must be the first cause of everything—the eternal uncreated God.*
- ? We talked about God's immutability. How does this character of God offer you hope and assurance as you live your life? *God's character cannot change, so we can trust Him completely to fulfill all that He has promised to do.*
- ? How can we encourage one another to accomplish the tasks God has given each of us? *To acknowledge our fears and hesitations to one another and then look to Scripture for encouragement and support as we pray for one another would be a great start. We can remind one another that it is God working through us that allows us to accomplish His work here in the world. Whether it is sharing the gospel with friends or being a better parent, God empowers us through the Holy Spirit to accomplish those things.*





MEMORY VERSE

Exodus 20:1–5a And God spoke all these words, saying, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.”



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for His unchanging character.
- Thank God that He chooses to use imperfect people to accomplish His plans.
- Ask God for trust to obey Him.