

God Prepares Moses

Passages: Ex 1–4

Memory Verse

“A man’s heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.” (Proverbs 16:9)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God prepared Moses from his birth, arranging his family, upbringing, and education, to shape Moses into His worker.2. Moses had shortcomings, but God used them for Moses’ benefit and training.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God keeps His promises and is faithful.2. God is a deliverer. His deliverance always arrives at the right time.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Consider the ways God has trained us and prepared us in our own lives.2. Consider how we can further train and apply ourselves in order to shape ourselves as God’s worker.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. God’s Plan for Moses in Egypt (Ex 2:1–10)
- B. God’s Plan for Moses in the Wilderness (Ex 2:11–25)
- C. God Calls Moses (Ex 3:1–4:20)

Life Application: How Is God Preparing Me?

Memory Verse

Conclusion: God prepared Moses from his birth, arranging his family, upbringing, and education, to shape Moses into His worker. Despite his mistakes, God remained with Moses and used such trials for Moses’ benefit and training.

Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

No prophet has spoken face to face with God like Moses did. He is one of the most prominent figures in biblical history and highly esteemed among the Israelites. And with good reason: Moses is known not only for delivering God's people out of Egypt, but also for receiving the Old Testament laws and guiding the people through the wilderness to the promised land. Today, we'll be examining how exactly God prepared Moses to be His humble and faithful servant.

A. God's Plan for Moses in Egypt (Ex 2:1–10)

Let's begin by briefly reviewing the story of Moses' birth.

1. **Why did Pharaoh want to kill all the Hebrew boys?**
Pharaoh wanted to kill the Hebrew boys because the Israelites had grown numerous. He was afraid that the Israelites may turn against Egypt (Ex 1:9–10, 15–16).
2. **How did Moses' mother preserve his life?**
By hiding him for three months and then placing him in a basket into the Nile River (Ex 2:1–3).
3. **How did Moses become the son of Pharaoh's daughter?**
Pharaoh's daughter found him in a basket and had compassion on him. She decided to raise Moses as her own son (Ex 2:5–10).

The Faith of Moses' Parents

When we look back now, it is clear that God was already preparing the path for Moses' birth and growth. Despite the harsh trials they were forced to endure, his parents, Amram and Jochebed (Ex 6:20), are counted among the faithful in the Book of Hebrews: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents [...] and they were not afraid of the king's command" (Heb 11:23). By faith, Moses' mother devised and enacted a plan, and by faith, left the ultimate result to the sovereign God. She demonstrated what it means to truly place everything in God's hands and to trust that His authority and power is greater than any earthly king's.

God answers our faith. God gave Jochebed a reward that was far beyond any possible hope. After placing Moses' life in God's hands, not only could she continue raising her son, but she even received wages for doing so (Ex 2:9–10). Though the Bible doesn't tell us much about the time that he spent in the care of his mother, we can speculate that Moses' mother taught him of their people and of how God had preserved his life. She answered God's faithfulness by ensuring that Moses knew God before he went to the palace.

Moses Grows in the Palace

Let's read Exodus 2:10. "And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, 'Because I drew him out of the water.'" In accordance with God's plan, Moses was named and educated in Egypt to become God's instrument. Acts 7:22 states that Moses was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Egypt was one of the most advanced civilizations of the time, and God had given Moses the privilege of growing up as royalty within the Egyptian palace. As a result, he experienced the best education that one could possibly receive, an opportunity that would never have been available to him if he had been a slave.

Although Moses experienced the pleasure and privilege of living in the palaces of Egypt, he never forgot who he was or where he came from. Let's read Exodus 2:11–14. Upon seeing an Egyptian beating his fellow Israelite, Moses took justice into his own hands and killed the Egyptian. Despite his status,

position, and lifestyle, he clearly believed that God’s purpose for him was to deliver His people. We know that he wasn’t incorrect in this assumption, but what was wrong with Moses’ actions?

1. He carried out his own plan, not God’s

Moses made the mistake of believing that it was his personal authority and power that would free the Israelites. His actions show his self-will – murdering the Egyptian was not submission to God’s will, but an act of self-righteous judgment. The act was centered on himself, not on God or God’s people.

2. He didn’t wait on God’s timing

Moses acted on an impulse, without waiting to see the big picture. He decided that it was necessary to act now, not realizing that it would actually be another forty years before God was ready to free His people.

Moses’ actions demonstrate his strong self-will and a failure to wait for God. Let’s read Exodus 2:15. Moses’ decision was not according to the plan or timing of God, so he was forced to flee.

In the same way, today we may have the right intentions, but the wrong timing may make our actions detrimental to others and to ourselves. This is why in all that we do, we need to make sure that we inquire of the Lord, not only to ask if we should do something, but also to ask if it is the right time for us to act. However, as much as we are prone to making mistakes, God never does. He wants us to follow His perfect plan, but even if we do not, God can still use our shortcomings to shape us into His perfect workers. Moses was driven by his flesh, but God used Moses’ impatience to bring him into the next phase of his life and training.

B. God’s Plan for Moses in the Wilderness (Ex 2:11–25)

A Well in the Wilderness

During the first phase of his life, Moses was taught about God, as well as given a royal education. But he was still not ready to be God’s servant – he took matters into his own hands and failed to inquire of God. He believed himself a deliverer (Acts 7:24–25), assuming others would see him as one, too. But now, after his mistake, he was forced to face the uncomfortable truth of his powerlessness. Let’s read Exodus 2:15. Disillusioned, uncertain, and at a loss, he fled into the wilderness and stopped at a well. And God was ready to renew and train him in the wilderness.

What does the wilderness make you think of? What kind of associations do you make with one? (*Allow students to brainstorm answers together.*) The Hebrew word for “wilderness” — “*midbār*” — can be defined as either “pasture,” “desert,” or “uninhabited land.”¹ A “wilderness” is a place where few people dwell and where there is no civilization or comforts of technology. There are very few modern conveniences that exist in the wilderness, and to live there, you must work hard with others and learn to adapt to nature’s course. It is a place of isolation.

After visualizing a wilderness, what do you now think of when you think of a “well”? (*Allow students to once again come up with answers.*) In any sort of wilderness, wells serve as a vital lifeline. You cannot settle in an area unless a well is found or dug up. It was at this kind of place that Moses stopped to take

¹*Blue Letter Bible*, s.v. “midbar,” accessed July 23, 2021, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H4057&t=NKJV>

stock of his life, his assumptions, and his hasty decision in killing the Egyptian. He now saw how lacking he was and, as a result, was forced to turn to a lifeline in the wilderness: the sovereign Lord.

Training in the Wilderness

Let's read Exodus 2:21–22. Although very little is said about his time there, we know from his resulting character, and from his time leading the Israelites, that these forty years in the wilderness transformed Moses into a very different person.

1. Lowliness and humility

Forty years in the wilderness stripped away his identity as a prince and revealed his true character beneath. In Egypt, Moses had status, wealth, and power because he was a mighty prince. However, God took it all away and made him a lowly shepherd. As a shepherd, his status as a prince and much of his education was worthless. His authority did nothing to help him tend to his father-in-law's flock. He no longer considered himself a "prince," but was "content" to live with his father-in-law as a "stranger in a foreign land" (Ex 2:22). He was willing to live an insignificant life.

2. Patience and endurance

Earlier, we imagined what a wilderness must look like. Can you imagine living in one for forty years? God brought the Israelites into the wilderness to "humble" and to "test" them (Deut 8:2), so we can infer that it is not easy to survive there. Moses had to learn how to endure affliction. The work of a shepherd trained him in understanding how to care for others. He had to be patient in tending to the needs of the sheep, and he had to lead them to drink water and graze in the field. He had to have the courage to defend them against wild predators. Where before others provided for him, now he had to work to provide for himself and his family. More than that, having no control over nature, he had to rely on the land for sustenance, and in turn, rely on God's power.

Moses had grown up believing he would deliver the Israelites, but as a result of his actions, he spent forty years in the wilderness living a relatively inconsequential life. He now understood that he was not capable of freeing them. Though Moses did not know it at this time, his job as a shepherd trained him in building up virtues that were necessary for him to learn not only as God's servant, but also as a chosen leader for God's people. It was eighty long years before God decided that Moses was ready to become an instrument for His purpose. Only when he accepted himself as "nobody" did God call him to become one of the most important leaders in Israelite history.

C. God Calls Moses (Ex 3:1–4:20)

The Burning Bush

The burning bush was God's first appearance in the Book of Exodus and the first time He showed Himself to Moses. Let's read Exodus 3:1–6. What is the significance of God's statement in verse 6? It had been generations since Jacob's death, and yet remarkably, the very same God whom they worshipped approached Moses here and now. More importantly, He remembered His covenant with them. His announcement was not simply of His identity, but also of His divinity and His faithfulness.

Let's read Exodus 2:23–25; 3:7–10. Notice how God called Moses by his name twice (v. 4)! God knew Moses, and he was important to Him. Moses might have thought he was an unimportant shepherd, but God had not forgotten him, and Moses remained a vital part of God's plan. After years of silence, God was ready to commission Moses to lead His people out of Egypt. For decades, the Israelites had

experienced so many hardships, but their cries had not gone unnoticed by God. He had seen, heard, looked, and acknowledged them. And now, it was finally time for Him to deliver them out of slavery.

Moses’ Reluctant Response

Though Moses had previously been impatient and impulsive when making decisions, his time in Midian shaped him into an exceedingly humble man (Num 12:3). So humble, in fact, that he vigorously denied the strength or ability to return to Egypt and do as God commanded. Let’s take a look at Moses’ many worries and concerns and see how God patiently responded to all of them.

Moses’ Concern	God’s Response
<p><i>“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”</i> (Ex 3:11)</p>	<p><i>“I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”</i> (Ex 3:12)</p>
<p><i>“Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”</i> (Ex 3:13)</p>	<p><i>“I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.” ’</i> (Ex 3:14)</p>
<p><i>“But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The LORD has not appeared to you.’ ”</i> (Ex 4:1)</p>	<p>God gave Moses three miracles that he could perform to prove that God was with him. First, God made Moses’ rod turn into a snake (Ex 4:2–5). Second, God allowed Moses to turn his hand from healthy to leprous to healthy again (Ex 4:6–7). Lastly, God told Moses that he could take water from the river and God would turn the water into blood on dry land (Ex 4:9).</p>
<p><i>“O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”</i> (Ex 4:10)</p>	<p><i>“Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”</i> (Ex 4:11–12)</p>
<p><i>“O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send.”</i> (Ex 4:13)</p>	<p>Upon hearing this, God became angry and said: <i>“Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do.”</i> (Ex 4:14–15)</p>

Let’s look at Moses’ three main concerns.

1. Who am I? (Ex 3:11)

Moses was concerned that he had been away from Egypt for forty years and was no longer a prince of Egypt but a fugitive. He considered himself as being of no status. In response, God reassured Moses by telling him that He will be with him (Ex 3:14). Moses was not going to be alone; God was

going to be working with him.

2. They will not believe me (Ex 4:10)

Moses was concerned that the Egyptians and even his own people, the Israelites, would not believe him. If we recall, in his last conversation with the Hebrews, they accused him of murdering an Egyptian and spoke to him as an outsider. Moses was afraid that if he went and spoke before them, they would not believe him. In response, God showed Moses three miracles that he could use to convince people that Moses was sent by God. This way his words were not just words, as he had evidence to prove that God was working with him.

3. I am not eloquent (Ex 4:10)

Moses considered himself ineloquent and inadequate despite the education that he received as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. But God responded, "Who has made man's mouth? [...] Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say" (Ex 4:11–12). God's power is enough to overcome any of man's inadequacies. However, Moses protested yet again, so to help Moses overcome his lack of confidence, God sent Aaron who would be Moses companion and mouthpiece to speak on his behalf (Ex 4:14).

Altogether, Moses questioned God's choosing of him five times. But God was exceedingly patient with Moses and addressed each concern and worry that he had. He had been preparing Moses for this role since his birth, and it was God who called him to this task – but only after He knew Moses was ready for it. Though Moses felt unable to take it on, after forty years in Egypt and forty years in Midian, Moses had been trained into a humble and faithful servant that could be used by God. It was only then that it was time for Moses to take up the role, and for God to fulfill the promise that He had made to His people. In the same way, God is still looking for faithful and humble followers who are willing to be used by God for His purpose and glory.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What was the purpose of Moses' forty years in Egypt?** It was the first part of God's training for him.
- 2. What was wrong with Moses' act of killing the Egyptian?** He carried out his own plan, not God's, and he didn't wait on God's timing.
- 3. What key characteristics did Moses learn while living in the wilderness?** Lowliness, humility, patience, and care.
- 4. Why was Moses reluctant to follow God's calling?** He had fled Egypt in order to escape Pharaoh's wrath, and at the time, his fellow Israelites had spoken to him as an outsider. He also considered himself ineloquent despite his education in the palace. Furthermore, his time in Midian had made him exceedingly humble, and he believed someone else would be better equipped for the task.
- 5. How did God reassure Moses' worries?** God responded to Moses' questions with patience and gave him the assistance he needed to return to Egypt. Not only did God allow Moses to perform three miracles to prove that God was with him, but He also said Aaron would help Moses with this task.

Life Application

How Is God Preparing Me?

From Moses' birth and calling, we can see how God had prepared Moses to fill the role of the one who would lead the Israelites out of Egypt. His accomplishments may feel entirely out of our reach, but God has given each of us an equally valuable role in His kingdom. He has specially chosen each of us to serve and has prepared our lives accordingly so that we are given the chance to become His good and faithful

servants. What do you think God is preparing you for? What kind of skills, abilities, or hobbies do you have that could be used for the benefit of the church? Let's take a moment and consider what God is preparing us to do, as well as the ways He is preparing us.

Activity

(Teachers: A chart has been added to the end of this document. Please give copies to students. Some questions may require guidance or discussion for students to generate ideas. If there is no time to complete it during class, you can assign the remaining questions as homework.)

Through all these different areas in our lives, God is preparing and training us. God did not use Moses right away to lead the people out of Egypt; Moses was already eighty years old when he came before Pharaoh to do God's work (Ex 7:7). This was because Moses had to be trained in all these different areas until he was a vessel that God was willing to use to complete this great task. God took the time to prepare Moses, so that he could fulfill God's calling. In the same way, God is preparing us and giving us opportunities to serve and to be used by Him. Though we may not know what that purpose is exactly right now, we can continue to prepare and train ourselves through our families, our trials, our education, and our service to Him today.

Memory Verse

"A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps." (Proverbs 16:9)

Meaning

It is easy for us to assert our own will and desire over God's will. While there is nothing wrong with seeking out specific careers or futures for ourselves, it is important to remember that God's will is infinitely more perfect than our own. He is not only our Creator, but also our sovereign Lord who knows our past, present, and future. Like Moses' parents, as long as we fully trust in Him, He will repay our faith with faith and bless us in ways beyond our own hope or imagination.

Conclusion

God prepared Moses from his birth, arranging his family, upbringing, and education to shape Moses into His worker. Despite his mistakes, God remained with Moses and used such trials for Moses' benefit and training. In much the same way, God has placed us where we are in accordance with His perfect will. When we accept the opportunities that He has given us and allow Him to shape us into His workers, He will remain faithful to us.

Lesson 10 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does the memory verse teach us about God's will in our lives?
God's will is infinitely more perfect than our own. He is not only our Creator, but also our sovereign Lord who knows our past, present, and future.

2. "So God heard their groaning, and God _____ His _____ with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God _____ upon the children of Israel, and God _____ them." (Exodus 2:24–25)
remembered, covenant, looked, acknowledged

3. Why was it wrong of Moses to kill the Egyptian?
His actions demonstrate his strong self-will and a failure to wait for God. Moses' decision was not according to the plan or timing of God.

4. In what ways did his time in the wilderness transform Moses into a different person?
His job as a shepherd trained him in building up virtues that were necessary for him to learn not only as God's servant, but also as a chosen leader for God's people. After forty years in Egypt and forty years in Midian, Moses had been trained into a humble and faithful servant that could be used by God.

5. How did God respond to Moses' fears and worries during his calling?
But God was exceedingly patient with Moses and addressed each concern and worry that he had. He had been preparing Moses for this role since his birth, and it was God who called him to this task – but only after He knew Moses was ready for it.

6. Is there anything in your current life that you think God is using to train you for His work?
Personal answers.

Life Application Activity: How Is God Preparing Me?

Moses	Me (Today)	Me (Future)
FAMILY		Consider your current skills, interests, abilities, and responsibilities. What holy work do you hope to help with in the future? After considering something specific, list ways that you can prepare yourself to serve in this holy work in the following areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills: What skills are necessary for you to learn? • Spiritual virtues: What spiritual virtues are required for you to do this holy work well? • Knowledge of God and His word: Aside from general understanding of God’s word, in what areas of biblical knowledge are you lacking, which may be necessary or relevant to this spiritual work?
Moses was born to the tribe of Levi, and his parents played an important part in preserving his life. God has placed us in our families for a reason. They may pass the faith on to us, as Moses’ mother did.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of faith do your parents have? • What teachings have you learned from your parents, either directly or indirectly? • What responsibilities do you have to fulfill at home? How do you think these would shape you in preparing to be God’s worker? 	
TRIALS AND FAILURES		
Moses’ life was full of ups and downs. He fled from Egypt as an exile and was transformed from prince, to shepherd, to leader of God’s people. But his failures are just important for us to take note of as his victories. He made rash decisions at times, and did not wait for God’s timing, especially during his life in Egypt. Today, our own failures and trials are also a part of God’s training for us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of shortcomings, failures, or trials have you personally experienced? • Can you think of any benefit from experiencing these? • Read James 1:2–4. What is the Bible’s teaching regarding trials and tribulations? Why do you think it is so important to have patience? Think of at least one scenario in your life where additional patience may have helped you to resolve the situation. 	
EDUCATION		
Moses received the best education as a prince in Egypt. Worldly knowledge is necessary and beneficial to us because we need it to function in society. At the same time, it can greatly benefit the kingdom of God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a moment and write down two to three subjects that you are interested in learning at school or on your own. • How can these subjects benefit the kingdom of God? (For example, if you are interested in pursuing art, this skill 	

	<p>could be useful in making textbooks for the next generation of students.)</p>	
TRAINING		
<p>While in the wilderness, Moses received additional training that could not be experienced or taught in the palace. He learned how to live away from the comforts of the palace, and the benefits of physically laboring for his sheep. He had to exercise patience, wisdom, and experience to take care of the defenseless sheep. This same training benefited him when guiding God’s children to the promised land.</p> <p>It is clear from his life that God was aware of Moses’ failures, but still cared for him very deeply. Through His power and wisdom, He guided Moses through the trials in his life and used them to shape him into an effective worker.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We may not be in the wilderness physically, but we are all being trained by God daily – whether you’re willing to be trained or not – to be His precious vessel. Write down two to three things you know for sure God is training you for now. • Why do you think these things are important in shaping you to become His faithful worker? • Of the fruit of the Spirit, which do you think you need the most of in order to become more like Him? Why? • Keeping in mind the strengths that you have, how can you help the church? Write down at least two things that you don’t normally do, and set a time for yourself to carry them out. 	