

# The Call of Moses

KEY VERSES

Exodus 3:14–15



## Lesson Overview (TEACHER)

**TRANSITION** Lesson 14 showed God’s preservation of Israel in Egypt through Joseph. In Lesson 16, Israel’s population grew into a multitude, and they were enslaved by the Egyptians. God raised Moses to deliver them and preserve His people despite Pharaoh’s resistance.

**CENTRAL TRUTH** God calls leaders to deliver His people.

**KEY TEXTS** Exodus 1:1–5:23

**SPOTLIGHT ON THE GOSPEL** God continued to fulfill His promises to His people even while they were enslaved in Egypt. God called Moses to deliver His people from slavery. Moses points us to the true deliverer, Jesus Christ, who will save all who believe once and for all through His death on the cross.

## Family Devotional (PARENT)

This section explains what the Family Devotional covers for parents to use with their children each day of the week. Each devotional reinforces the lesson taught in Sunday School.

- DAILY DEVOTIONS**
- Day 1 **The Call of Moses** (Sunday School review)  
Exodus 1:1–5:23
  - Day 2 **Moses’ Birth in the Midst of Slavery**  
Exodus 1:1–2:14
  - Day 3 **God Calls Moses in Midian**  
Exodus 2:15–3:6
  - Day 4 **God Reveals His Name**  
Exodus 3:7–15
  - Day 5 **God Instructs Moses**  
Exodus 3:16–4:17
  - Day 6 **Moses Returns to Egypt**  
Exodus 4:18–31
  - Day 7 **Moses Confronts Pharaoh**  
Exodus 5:1–23



### LAST WEEK



### NEXT WEEK



## The Call of Moses

**NOTE:** Do not read this commentary aloud to the children. The commentary is designed to help educate and prepare the teacher for the lesson. The teacher's goal in studying the commentary is to better understand the lesson.

### THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL MULTIPLIED BUT SUFFERED BONDAGE

After Jacob died, Joseph reassured his brothers that what they had meant for evil against him God had intended for good for the whole nation (see Gen 50:15–20); he had been sold into slavery, but God had raised him up to a position of authority to preserve the family of Jacob (Israel) in Egypt. The family settled in Goshen (Gen 47:1); over many generations, they grew (Exod 1:7) from just over seventy persons (v5; see Acts 7:14) to a multitude (see Exod 12:37). This growth meant that God's promise to the patriarchs of many descendants (see Gen 15:5; 17:6; 22:17) was being realized.

Many generations after Joseph died (Exod 1:6; hundreds of years, see Gen 15:13; Exod 12:40–41) a new Pharaoh (a new dynasty) arose in Egypt and Joseph's service to Egypt was forgotten (1:8). This new Pharaoh recognized the danger of having the large number of "the people of Israel" on Egypt's frontier (vv9–10,12b), so the Egyptians enslaved the people of Israel (v11). *This oppression was intended to reduce the number the people of Israel, but they multiplied even more (v12), so the Egyptians subjected them to harder and more bitter conditions (vv13–14).*

To curtail the growth of Israel, Pharaoh (the king, v15) ordered the Hebrew midwives—Shiphrah and Puah (v15)—to allow the infant girls of the Hebrews to live but to kill the boys (v16). But the Hebrew midwives "feared God" (vv17,21) and did not do as he had ordered; for this God blessed them (v21). Still, the "people multiplied and grew very strong" (v20b); the king then commanded the Hebrews that they must drown their newborn sons (v22).

### MOSES' LIFE: BORN IN EGYPT BUT FLED TO MIDIAN

Despite the king's dreadful command (see v22), one Hebrew couple hid their newborn son for three months (2:1–2). When hiding him became impossible, his mother constructed a waterproof basket made from the reeds that grew in the Nile (v3). *She put her son in the basket—and put the basket in the river—trusting God that her son would be protected (see Heb 11:23).* The basket was discovered by "the daughter of Pharaoh" (Exod 2:5); although she recognized that the child was Hebrew, she "took pity on him" (v6) and saved him from the Pharaoh's command (see 1:22). The child's sister—who had been watching over the basket (v4)—stepped forward and offered to find nurse for the child (v7; who was in fact his real mother, v8). That offer was accepted (v9). The child became Pharaoh's daughter's "son"; he was given the best Egyptian education (see Acts 7:22) and he was named "Moses" (in Hebrew—"to draw out"; Exod 2:10).

Moses grew up knowing he was Hebrew, and he took an interest in the circumstances of his people (v11a). Once (when he was about forty years of age; see Acts 7:23), he saw an Egyptian abusing a Hebrew; he impetuously took it upon himself to kill the Egyptian and hide the body (Exod 2:11–12). On another occasion, he saw two Hebrew men fighting and sought to reprimand the offender (v13). But that man rebuked Moses and informed him that his murder of the Egyptian was known (v14a). Moses was afraid of Pharaoh's reprisal and so he fled from Egypt and went to "the land of Midian" (vv14b–15).

Moses lived ("sojourned"; see v22b) in Midian for another forty years (compare Acts 7:23 with Exod 7:7, Deut 34:7); during that time, he met his wife Zipporah (Exod 2:21), he had a son named Gershom (v22), and he served his father-in-law Reuel (v18; later Jethro, see 4:18). All the while God was fully aware of the suffering of the people of Israel; "God heard...and God remembered"; and He had not forgotten about His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (2:23–24).

### MOSES' CALLING

One day, Moses' idyllic life as a shepherd took a dramatic turn; "the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush" (3:1-2). This amazing bush appeared to be burning, but was not burned up! As he approached the bush, he heard God call his name, and he responded (vv3-4). Moses was told the place where he was standing was holy (v5), indicating that he was in the presence of God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v6).

Moses was informed that the LORD was aware of His people's suffering in Egypt (vv7,9), that the LORD still intended to fulfill His promise to bring them to the land of promise (v8; see v17), and that He was calling Moses as His messenger to lead them out (v10). Moses was hesitant—he did not want to take up this calling. First, he said he needed to know God's name (v13). The LORD revealed that His name was I AM WHO I AM (v14; the Hebrew word translated I AM is a form of *YHWH/Yahweh* that appears in the English text as the LORD). He again identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v15). The LORD further explained His purpose for His people and for their oppressors, the Egyptians (vv16-22).

Moses objected that the people might not believe he was called by the LORD (4:1). The LORD then gave Moses a series of sign miracles to confirm his calling: his rod would change to a serpent (vv2-5), his hand would become leprous but return to normal (vv6-8), and water would be turned to blood (v9). Moses then claimed he was not a good speaker (v10), so the LORD appointed Aaron to speak for Him (vv11-17). Finally, Moses consented; he took his family and returned to Egypt.

The LORD instructed Aaron to meet Moses; Moses then related to Aaron all that the LORD wanted them to do (vv27-28). Moses and Aaron met with the elders and people and told them all that the LORD had spoken to Moses; when they showed them the signs he had been given, they believed and worshiped (vv29-31).

The meeting of Moses and Aaron with the elders and the people (vv29-31) had ended on a high note, but the meeting with Pharaoh did not go well. *When Moses and Aaron delivered the LORD's message to Pharaoh: "Let my people go" (5:1), Pharaoh's response was, "Who is the LORD?"* He flatly declared he did not know the LORD, that he would not obey Him, and that he would "not let Israel go" (v2). When they implored him ("Please let us go", v3) and tried to explain the reasons why Pharaoh should comply with their request (v3), Pharaoh accused them of taking "the people away from their work" (vv4-5). He not only commanded that the people of Israel return to their labors, but he also increased their hardship (v9). He also informed them that they would no longer be given straw to make their quota of bricks (v7; straw was a crucial component to make clay into usable bricks), and yet the quota of bricks was not to be diminished (v8). Pharaoh then set "taskmasters and foremen" over them who would harshly enforce these new commands (vv10-14).

When the foremen (Israelite men who served on behalf of the Egyptians) complained to Pharaoh about the new regulations (vv15-16), they were told that they were shirkers who were just trying to evade their work (v17); Pharaoh reiterated the new demands (v18). The foreman then complained to Moses and Aaron that, in effect, they had only made things worse (vv20-21). Moses then complained to the LORD (vv22-23). This was not what Moses had expected, but the LORD had a plan (see 6:1).

### LESSON SUMMARY

Exodus 1:1-5:23 describes Israel's population growth in Egypt and their enslavement under a new Pharaoh. The Pharaoh ordered to kill male infants to control the population, but Moses was spared because his mother defied the order, and he was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Later, Moses flees to Midian after killing an Egyptian, but God calls Moses through a burning bush to be his spokesman and lead Israel's deliverance.





# Teaching Outline

This section is designed to be used as a clean copy of your notes for teaching the lesson. Follow the teaching outline below as a step-by-step guide during your Sunday School lesson.

- PRAY** with your class that the children would understand the central truth and gospel message, and that you would teach the children effectively.
- REVIEW** last week's lesson and the central truth to begin your lesson.
- INTRODUCE** this week's lesson and the central truth using the selected introduction, illustration, or application from our additional resources page.

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**READ** the key texts from Scripture you selected that connect to the central truth.

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**TEACH** your class using your summarized notes and questions from the **LESSON OUTLINE**. The points provided are the main headers from the commentary. Use the visual aid you selected and always connect your lesson back to the central truth.

**1. THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL MULTIPLIED BUT SUFFERED BONDAGE (EXODUS 1:1-22)**

- Why were the Israelites enslaved?

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**2. MOSES' LIFE: BORN IN EGYPT BUT FLED TO MIDIAN (EXODUS 2:1-24)**

- Who was Moses adopted by?

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**3. MOSES' CALLING (EXODUS 3:1-5:23)**

- What is the LORD's name?

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**CONCLUDE** this week's lesson with the spotlight on the gospel and tie it into the central truth and the lesson you just taught.

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**PRAY** for the children hearing this lesson that they would be saved and follow the LORD.

LESSON OUTLINE

