

S T U D Y G U I D E



MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

*Discovering
the Character
of God*

R.C. SPROUL



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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

Renew your Mind.

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The Invisible Hand of God

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

Despite all the hardship and struggle Joseph endured while in slavery in Egypt, he did not fail to recognize the sovereign hand of God in every event of His life. In response to his brother's repentance, Joseph responded, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good." This theme of providence carries over into the events recorded in the beginning of the book of Exodus. Just as Joseph's brothers intended to bring about his destruction, Pharaoh sought to destroy all the Hebrew baby boys. Instead, God used this evil edict to preserve His servant Moses and to place him in the one house in which he would have access to all the "wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). This first lesson in our series introduces the mediator of the old covenant and explains the historical context into which God placed him.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 37–50, Exodus 1–2:10; Acts 7:9–22

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To become familiar with events leading to Israel's residency in Egypt
2. To understand the incentives and motivations driving Pharaoh's edicts against the Hebrews
3. To comprehend the conduct of the midwives and God's approval of it
4. To introduce Moses

QUOTATION

At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house, and when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.

—Acts 7:20–22

LECTURE OUTLINE

I. The Origin of Israel in Egypt

- a. At the behest of Joseph, the son of Jacob and steward of all Egypt, the children of Israel moved from Canaan on account of the famine afflicting the ancient Near East.
- b. The sons of Israel and their families settled in Goshen.
 - i. The land of Goshen offered rich pastureland for the flocks of the children of Israel.
 - ii. They lived apart from the Egyptians and prospered.
- c. After some time, Joseph and the Pharaoh under which he served died. A new Pharaoh arose in Egypt who neither knew Joseph nor respected his contributions to Egypt.

II. The Oppression of the Children of Israel

- a. The new Pharaoh feared the growth and strength of the children of Israel.
 - i. Pharaoh worried that the Israelites would join their strength with external, invading forces in the event of war.
 1. In order to avoid this eventuality, he enslaved the Israelites in an attempt to weaken them and decrease the lifespan of Israelite males.
 2. The Egyptians enforced severe burdens of labor on the Israelites.
 - ii. Contrary to expectations, the harder the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, the more they multiplied and prospered.
- b. In an attempt to stem the growth of the Israelites, Pharaoh ordered the Israelite midwives to kill the male Hebrew babies.
 - i. The midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, had unparalleled access to the births of Israelite children, and Pharaoh demanded that they commit infanticide.
 - ii. The midwives refused to follow this directive because they feared the Lord, and the Lord blessed the midwives for their civil disobedience.
- c. Pharaoh questioned the midwives on their failure to adhere to his command.
 - i. Instead of responding with an accurate description of their behavior, the midwives lied to Pharaoh and blamed their failure on the vigor of the Hebrew women during the birthing process.
 - ii. God's approval and blessing of the midwives and their conduct demonstrates the necessity of disobeying civil government when its edicts run contrary to the law of God.
 - iii. Truth is owed to those to whom it is due, and the midwives behavior illuminates this principle and the necessity of discretion.
- d. In response, Pharaoh issued a nationwide edict ordering all male children to be cast into the Nile.

III. The Birth of Moses

- a. Moses was born to a Levite man and woman in this turbulent time.
 - i. Rather than cast him in the Nile, Moses' mother hid him in their home.
 - ii. After three months, Moses' mother could not hide him any longer, so she constructed a small ark and hid Moses' in the reeds of the Nile. Her actions demonstrated a devout trust in the will of God.
- b. With Miriam, Moses' older sister, watching from a distance, the daughter of Pharaoh found the ark in which Moses lay when she went to bathe.
 - i. Instead of following her father's edict, she had compassion on the crying infant.
 - ii. At Miriam's prompting, the daughter of Pharaoh called for Moses' mother to wean him, after which he joined her household and became her son.
 - iii. She named the child "Moses," which sounds like the Hebrew word for "draw out."

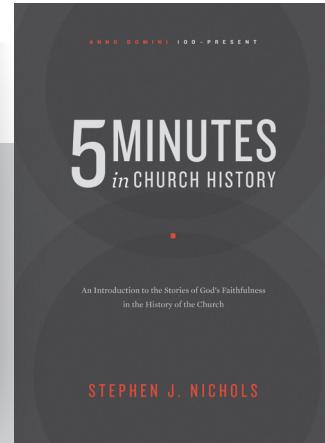
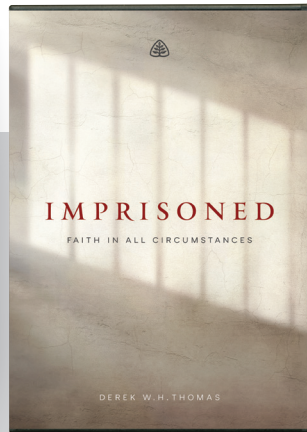
STUDY QUESTIONS

1. The book of Genesis ends with the Pharaoh of Egypt ordering the sons of Jacob to leave Goshen and return to Canaan with Joseph.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. The mediator of the covenant between the nation of Israel and God in the Old Testament was _____.
 - a. Adam
 - b. Abraham
 - c. Moses
 - d. David
3. The Decalogue is another name for the _____.
 - a. Ten Commandments
 - b. Civil Law
 - c. Ceremonial Law
 - d. covenant with Abraham
4. A Christian must always answer any interrogative leveled at him regardless of the question or the individual asking it.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. A daughter of Pharaoh found Moses in the river and immediately reported her finding to Pharaoh
 - a. True
 - b. False

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Spend some time reading (or rereading) the narrative of Joseph found in chapters 37–50 of Genesis. What does this narrative say about the work of God in the lives of His people? What role does Judah play in the narrative, and why does the author take special care to explain his role?
2. What does it mean to say that an individual, event, or rite prefigured Jesus Christ? How does Moses prefigure Jesus, and what do the Apostolic writers of the New Testament have to say on this issue?
3. Discuss the effects the Decalogue has had on Western law systems (e.g. the Constitution of the United States of America).
4. What does it mean, “To fear the Lord”? What does the Bible say about obeying authority? When may Christians disobey the edicts issued by those who possess authority over them?
5. Are Christians allowed to lie? What is the definition of lying, and how does it apply in the case of the Israelite midwives and their response to Pharaoh?

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