



# God Raises Moses to Lead Israel

*Exodus 3-4*



## LESSON GOAL

Students will fear and praise God's holiness.

## BIBLE TRUTHS

- God is holy and eternal.
- God revealed Himself to Moses in a miraculous way.
- God called Moses to lead Israel.
- God told Moses His plan to deliver Israel.

## KEY VERSE

"The LORD said, 'I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows'" (Exodus 3:7).

## APPLICATION

- Fear and obey God because He is holy.
- Praise and obey God because He is eternal.
- Trust God because His plans cannot be stopped.

## NEXT WEEK

God Sends Plagues on Egypt  
Read Exodus 7-10.

### Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

4



## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Bible Background

God sovereignly allowed the Israelites to be oppressed more than they could bear. After suffering approximately four centuries of cruel bondage, they finally cried out to the Lord, the God of their fathers (Deut. 26:7). God heard their groaning and remembered His covenant with Abraham (Ex. 2:24). Egypt had been a place of tremendous growth for Israel, but the 400 years of affliction were coming to an end (Gen. 15:13). It was time for God to judge Egypt and to make Israel into a holy nation. As He often has done throughout human history, God chose to glorify Himself by using a weak human instrument to accomplish His will. But before God would use Moses, Moses had much to learn about God.

When Moses left the courts of Egypt, he was 40 years old (Acts 7:23). He believed that God would use him as the instrument of Israel’s deliverance (7:25). But instead of delivering the people, Moses ended up fleeing Egypt alone, trying to save his own life. While God waited for Israel to cry out to Him, He had prepared for Moses a home in the land of Midian, a wife named Zipporah, and a job tending his father-in-law’s sheep.

### The Lord Gets Moses’ Attention

Exodus 3:1 picks up with “Moses tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law.” (Jethro was also named Reuel in Exodus 2:18.) But what is not immediately obvious is the fact that 40 years had passed between Moses’ fleeing Egypt and his seeing the burning bush (Acts 7:30). Moses is seldom portrayed as an 80-year-old man watching sheep in the wilderness, much less one still working for his father-in-law! It is tempting to imagine what Moses was like during these 40 years, but Scripture reveals very little. Hebrews 11:25 makes clear that when he left Egypt, he forsook the pleasures of sin and the treasure belonging to royalty. But as to his spiritual state during his wilderness tenure, Scripture reveals only that he had failed to circumcise his son Gershom, an omission that nearly cost Moses his life (Ex. 4:24–26).

Moses’ encounter with God in the wilderness began when he noticed a burning bush on Mount Horeb. Mount Horeb, located in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula, is better known as Mount Sinai, the same mountain on which God later gave Moses the Ten Commandments. Moses, the author of Exodus, calls it the “mountain of God,” not because it had a religious significance at that time, but because of its future importance to the people of Israel. Few places outside the Promised Land would have more significance to the Israelites than Mount Horeb, the mountain where God would make His covenant with them.

Moses went to see the strange sight of the burning bush. Unknown to him, he was actually seeing the angel of the Lord. When the angel of the Lord, which literally means the “messenger of Yahweh,” called to Moses, Exodus 3:4 says that “God called to him.” Throughout the Old Testament, the angel of the Lord spoke about

### Additional Reference Materials

*Moses and the Gods of Egypt: Studies in Exodus*  
by John J. Davis

*The MacArthur Study Bible* by John MacArthur

God in the third person; but at other times, as in this passage, he is directly identified as God. The voice of the angel is the voice of God. It is best to understand the angel of the Lord as the preincarnate Christ. The angel of the Lord, God Himself, was present in that bush.

Having heard the call of God, Moses answered, "Here I am" (Ex. 3:4). But he must not have been aware that he was speaking to God or of God's holiness. God quickly warned him, even before identifying Himself, to not come any closer and to take off his sandals (3:5). Bare feet were an expression of reverence for God and humility before Him. Also, it was a matter of life and death if an unholy man found himself in the presence of the holy God. The presence of the angel of the Lord made the ground holy. Although God is gracious, it is a serious thing to be in His presence. His holiness must not be disregarded.

### **The Lord's Revelation**

After the Lord warned Moses about His holiness, He revealed Himself as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex. 3:6). That name spoke volumes to Moses. This was the God who had called Abram, who had given Abram a son in his old age, who had promised him descendants as numerous as the stars, and who had given to his descendants the land of Canaan as their inheritance. This was the God who gave Isaac twin sons and Jacob his 12 children, who gave Joseph favor with Pharaoh, and who multiplied the descendants of Israel. This was not just an ancient god, but the one true God. Moses responded just as any sinful man would; he "hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God" (3:6).

The Lord revealed Himself to Moses as a God who watches and who saw the oppression of His people (Ex. 3:7). He is a God of compassion who knew the sorrow of the Israelite slaves (3:7). The Lord is the deliverer of His people and the one who would faithfully bring Israel to a land promised long ago. He is a provider who would cause the land to flow with milk and honey, a phrase describing the fertile abundance of the land (3:8). The Lord also revealed that Moses would be used to deliver God's people out of Egypt (3:10).

Moses must have been shocked. He was an 80-year-old man lying with his face in the dust and hearing the God of Abraham speak. And what a message of good news! God had been watching and listening! God was faithful; He would bring Israel out of Egypt and give them the Promised Land. But God wanted to use him! When Moses was younger, he was eager to lead Israel. But now he was concerned about God's choice.

### **The Lord's First Response**

Moses asked God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Ex. 3:11). Moses displayed a righteous attitude. Anyone called to God's service should likewise ask, "Who am I?" Moses saw nothing in himself to make him fit for God's service. He was a shepherd 40 years removed from the courts of Egypt.

God did not rebuke Moses for his humble question. Neither did He assure Moses that he was the man for the job. Rather, God exalted His own sufficiency and His power to accomplish His will. He promised Moses, "I will certainly be with you." He gave Moses a sign: "When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain" (Ex. 3:12). The sign given to comfort Moses was God's own promise. As certainly as Moses was there worshiping God, one day he would worship God with the people he had brought from Egypt. No stronger assurance could have been given to Moses than God's presence and promise.

## The Lord's Second Response

Moses' next question was for more assurance not for himself, but for the children of Israel. He wanted God to tell him how to respond when they asked Moses, "What is His name?" (Ex. 3:13). Moses expected that the Israelites would want to know more about Yahweh. He knew their question would not be, "Who is this Yahweh?" The Israelites knew that it was Yahweh who had called Abraham and knew the promises God had given. But Moses expected them to ask, "What is His name?" meaning, "What is Yahweh like? What are His characteristics?"

In response, God described Himself to Moses as "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex. 3:14), perhaps best translated "I am the one who is and will be." The title captures God's self-sufficiency. God described Himself as the one whose existence is certain; time has no effect on Him. At any time, God is always the one who is and the one who will be. Moses was told to reveal God to the Israelites as the "I AM," a Hebrew verb very closely connected with God's name *Yahweh*. It was not a new revelation of God's character to the Israelites as much as the affirmation that He is constant. Moses was also told to describe God as "the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (3:15). The character of God is unchanging. Since God always is and always will be, He continually remains the God of Abraham. What was true of God in Israel's past was true of God in Israel's present. The God of Abraham always is the true God. What comfort there is in God's unchanging nature, which spans generations and even eternity!

Moses saw the unchanging nature of God's character not only in His past actions toward the fathers, but also in His future providence. God prepared Moses by telling him what to say to the elders of Israel (Ex. 3:16–17) and to the king of Egypt (3:18). But even more significant, He told Moses what would happen. Yes, God was the God of the past, but He was also the God of the future. He told Moses of the elders' reception (3:18), of the king's rejection (3:19), of the judgment upon Egypt (3:20), of the release of the Israelites (3:20), and even of how God would allow Israel to plunder the Egyptians (3:22). Moses had no reason to doubt or worry. "I AM WHO I AM" had arranged the future for the deliverance of His people.

## The Lord's Third Response

Although he was standing on holy ground, Moses began to forget to whom he was speaking. God promised Moses that the Israelites would heed him, but Moses had the audacity to ask, "What if?" He asked the Lord what he should do if the people did not believe him (Ex. 4:1). But the God of unlimited power did not punish Moses for his foolishness. Instead, God patiently gave Moses three signs that he could give the Israelites to validate his call. The first was changing the shepherd's rod into a snake and then turning it back again (4:3–5). The second was making his hand leprous (or inflicted with some other skin disease) and then healing it (4:6–8). The third, which was not performed on the mountain, was changing water into blood (4:9). Moses saw God's power revealed in an unsettling way as wood was changed to animal and healthy skin to rotten flesh. If God said Israel would listen, they certainly would.

## The Lord's Fourth Response

Moses' unwillingness to obey God's will became clear as he continued to make excuses for why God should send someone else. Moses claimed to be not eloquent but "slow of speech and slow of tongue" (Ex. 4:10). Although he once was mighty in words (Acts 7:22), Moses felt inadequate for the task before him. Having seen God change his rod into a snake should have settled those fears. But

Moses was looking for an escape. The Lord responded to Moses, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?" (Ex. 4:11). God quickly put an end to Moses' argument. A man's worth or ability would not be God's standard for calling Moses. God is sovereign; He not only can make people however He wishes, but He also can use them for whatever purpose He has decided. The Lord was patient with Moses and promised to be with his mouth and to teach him what to say (4:12).

### The Lord's Last Response

But Moses still was not willing to obey. He simply asked God to send someone else (Ex. 4:13). "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses" (4:14). Moses had gone too far, and finally the patient Lord was tired of Moses' lack of faith. But God still acted mercifully. He had pity on Moses' speech problem and provided his brother, Aaron, who spoke well, to be his "spokesman to the people" (4:16). The Lord sovereignly directed Aaron to meet Moses on Mount Horeb (4:27). Although Moses had objected, God's will was unmovable. He would do what He wished with Moses. Nothing could stop the plans of I AM WHO I AM.

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (Psalm 78:1).*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Review Questions

*Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.*

Was God helping Israel become a great nation?  
*Yes.*

Was Pharaoh afraid?  
*Yes, he was so afraid that he killed many babies.*

What did Moses' mother put Moses in?  
*She put him into a basket so he would float on the Nile River.*

In what amazing way did God protect Moses?  
*By having Pharaoh's daughter take him as a son.*

What did the Israelites finally do?  
*They cried out to God for help.*

Did God hear them?  
*Yes, and He already had a plan to help them.*

Does God hear our prayers?  
*Yes. When we cry out to God, He hears us.*



Can we trust Him when bad things happen?  
*Yes, because He always has a good plan.*

### Double Take

Have you ever been walking along and seen something strange or interesting? Did you pause and go closer for a better look? [Allow students to share a few stories.] Something like this happened to a shepherd in today's Bible lesson, and his story tops them all!



### Phone Call

Bring in two phones. Choose one student at a time to talk with you on the phone. Pretend to be the president, a police officer, or even the pastor. Call the student on the phone. Make up a conversation with the student. Tell the student that God has something very important to do. After you have done this with several students, tell them that in today's lesson, they will learn about a call that was much more amazing than a phone call.



### Jump over the Wiggling Snake

With a teacher holding each end of a rope and the students lined up on one side, ask the students to jump over the "snake" as it wiggles back and forth. During the Bible lesson, the students should listen carefully to hear about a snake.



### Follow the Leader

As the students imitate your actions or those of a student, do the following: clapping, toe tapping, tummy rubbing, jumping, hopping on left foot, hopping on right foot, clapping a friend's hands, reaching for the sky, and putting a hand in a pocket. In today's Bible lesson, they will learn about how God wanted the Israelites to follow their leader, Moses.

## PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

## Bible Lesson

### Reading of the Text

Read Exodus 3.

Last week, we began to learn about the book of Exodus. Exodus was written to show how God made the people of Israel into a great nation. A nation is a group of families who share the same land, the same rules, and the same ruler. Israel was

not a nation yet. Last week we learned that Israel grew so that there were millions of people. They were also called Hebrews.

At the same time, something very sad happened. Pharaoh became nervous about the people of Israel. He thought there were too many of them, and that they might help Egypt's enemies defeat Egypt. So Pharaoh made the Israelites do very hard work. He also killed all their baby boys. We learned last week that God protected one baby boy named Moses. When Moses grew up, he saw an Egyptian hurting a Hebrew, and he killed the Egyptian. The pharaoh found out and wanted to kill Moses, but Moses ran away to a land called Midian. There he got married and worked for his father-in-law, Jethro, for 40 years. He took care of Jethro's sheep and goats.

One day something amazing caught Moses' eye. There was a bush burning on the side of Mount Horeb. Moses had seen things burn before, but this was different. This bush did not burn up; the fire did not hurt the bush. This was amazing. So Moses went to see what it was. He walked up to the bush. Suddenly, the Lord called out, "Moses, Moses."

"Here I am," said Moses.

The Lord told Moses to take off his sandals because the ground he was standing on was holy. God is holy, and that means that He never, never sins. He does not want any sin around Him. Sandals get dirty, like our hearts are dirty with sin. Moses had to take his sandals off to remind him that his heart was sinful. No sinful things or people can be close to God. Moses knew that God was holy and became very, very afraid. He covered his face from God. He knew that God could kill him because of his sin.

God told Moses that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He told Moses that He knew about all the trouble the Hebrews were having in Egypt. He knew about the mean way the Egyptians were treating them. God told Moses that he wanted to set Israel free from Pharaoh. This was great news. But He was going to do something even better. He was going to give them a land in which to live, a land that would grow lots and lots of food.

But Moses was afraid. He knew he could be in trouble back in Egypt. He knew that the Hebrews had not listened to him when he tried to help them before. He said to the Lord, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" The Lord told him that He would be with him. And one day soon, the people would worship God at this very mountain.

Moses asked the Lord, "Who should I say sent me?"

The Lord said, "Tell them, I AM WHO I AM sent you. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." That sounds like a funny name—"I AM WHO I AM." But the people knew the name. They knew it meant the "one who always lives." God always lived in the past, and He would always live in the future. He was the powerful creator, God of heaven and earth.

But Moses was still afraid. He said, "What if the people do not believe me? What do I do?"

God told Moses to throw down his walking stick. He did, and it became a snake. Moses was afraid. But God told him to pick it up. When Moses touched it again, it became a stick. God told him to put his hand under his clothes near his chest. When he pulled his hand out, it was white. He put it back in again, and when he pulled it out the second time, it was normal.

Later, when Moses met the people and told them the good news, they did not believe him. So the people of Israel asked Moses to show them a sign so they could believe him. He did just what the Lord had said. The people saw his stick turn to a snake when



he threw it down, and they saw it turn back again. They also saw what happened to his hand when he put it near his chest. They were amazed and worshiped God. At long last, God was going to help Israel get away from the Egyptians.

God is holy. He is very different from us and has no sin. You and I have sin. And God hates sin. The Israelites needed someone to save them from sin and slavery. We need someone to save us from our sin. If not, we will not be able to stand before a holy God in heaven. God is holy, and He is a savior. Next week, we will see that God is going to punish the Egyptians, who did not believe in Him. God was going to use Moses to help free the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.



## Lesson Questions

Did God speak to Moses from a burning bush?

*Yes.*

What did Moses have to take off?

*His shoes.*

Why did he take off his shoes?

*Because God is holy.*

Did God tell Moses about His plan to free the Israelites?

*Yes. He said it was part of His promise to Abraham.*

What was God's name? What does it mean?

*"I AM." It means that God always was and always will be.*

What signs would Moses show the Israelites to prove that God would do this?

*God would make a stick turn into a snake, and He would make Moses' hand turn white.*

## Presentation Ideas



### A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



### Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



### Treasure Box

The object for the treasure box for this lesson is a branch with orange flames attached to it. After the Bible lesson, choose a student to take the "flaming" branch out of the treasure box.



### Memorizing Moses

Explain to the students that Moses wrote five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Help them to continue memorizing the names of the books.

## Praise and Worship

*Go Down, Moses*

*Holy, Holy*

*Trust and Obey*



### God Sends Moses

God told Moses to speak to Pharaoh  
*(Hold hands at sides of mouth; look down.)*

And tell him to let the Israelites go.  
*(Open arms wide.)*

But Moses asked Him, "Who am I?"  
*(Hold hand out with palms up.)*

"I'll be with you," the Lord replied.  
*(Cross hand over heart.)*

Moses asked, "What is your name?"  
*(Hold hand out with palms up.)*

"'I AM WHO I AM' is what you shall say."  
*(Cross hand over heart.)*

Moses questioned, "Will they believe?"  
*(Hold hand out with palms up.)*

God answered, "I'll show you miracles, three."  
*(Cross hand over heart; hold up three fingers.)*

Still Moses said, "My speech is poor."  
*(Hold palms together.)*

"I'll give you words," replied the Lord.  
*(Cross hand over heart.)*

Moses begged, "Please choose another."  
*(Hold palms together.)*

God said, "You'll have help from your brother."  
*(Cross hand over heart.)*

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).*

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



### Moses Necklace

Cut out “flames” from yellow, orange, and red construction paper. Write the memory verse on the back of each one and punch a hole in it. Provide dry cereal and yarn for the students. Let them string the flames to loops to make a necklace to wear. Remind the students that God is holy and that He is their helper. God has said that He will always be with us, just as He was with Moses.



### Helper Game

Choose one student to be in the center of a circle of students. Sing the song below to the tune of “Farmer in the Dell,” and let the student choose another student to be his helper in the middle of the circle. Continue the game until most of the students are in the middle. Let the students of the outside circle begin to select helpers from the middle.

Moses had a helper,  
Moses had a helper,  
Round and round and round we go,  
[Student’s name] picks a helper.

Talk with the students about how God chose Moses to help the Israelite people. God then chose Moses’ brother, Aaron, to help Moses. Whom has God chosen to help you? (Mom and Dad, grandparents, brothers and sisters, friends, and teachers, etc.) God helps us by putting very important people into our lives.



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### Moses Leads God’s People Chain

Cut a sheet of 8.5 x 11 paper in half lengthwise. Fold half of this paper into six accordion folds about one inch wide. Cut out a figure to make five or six people when opened up. Draw faces on each and glue on simple fabric robes. Add a cotton-ball beard to the first one for Moses, and glue or tape a brown chenille wire shaped like a cane to his hand.



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### Making Moses Memories

If your students are making the scrapbook discussed in the first lesson, reduce a coloring sheet to about 4 x 6 inches. Make enough copies for the class. Have each student color the picture, cut it out, and use photo corners or a glue stick to attach it to the second page of his scrapbook.



### Burning Bush

Let the students tear out orange and gold flames to glue to the bush on the coloring sheet at the back of this lesson. Talk about what God said to Moses at the bush.

**Variation:** Cut out tree trunks for students to glue to a piece of construction paper. Crumple small pieces of construction paper and glue them onto the tree trunk as flames. Give a slip of paper with Exodus 3:2 to each student to glue at the bottom of the tree.

## Coloring Sheets

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of this lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.



## MEMORY VERSE

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image” (Exodus 20:4).



## Second Commandment

If you have decided to assemble the Ten Commandments as you go through them, post the second commandment, Exodus 20:4, and help the students to memorize it. The Egyptians worshiped Pharaoh as a god. You might say he was a living idol. Did he have the power of the God named “I AM”?

“And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed” (Exodus 3:2).

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**“And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed” (Exodus 3:2).**







**“So the LORD said to him, ‘What is that in your hand?’ He said, ‘A rod.’ And He said, ‘Cast it on the ground.’ So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it” (Exodus 4:2–3).**

