

“Prepared for Service”
Exodus: The Redeemer and The Redeemed
Exodus 2:11-25

Moses Flees to Midian

11 One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. 12 He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, “Why do you strike your companion?” 14 He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.” 15 When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. 17 The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. 18 When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, “How is it that you have come home so soon today?” 19 They said, “An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.” 20 He said to his daughters, “Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.” 21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. 22 She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.”

God Hears Israel’s Groaning

23 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

What was God doing during the suffering of the Hebrews in Egypt? He was preparing a deliverer.

In our text today, we have two parallel stories: we have the individual story of Moses and his sojourning and the Israelites and their sojourning. But more importantly, we are going to see how God uses shaping influences to prepare a deliverer for his people.

1. Introduction

- a. The three scenes today are:
 - i. Scene 1: A Man Without a Place
 - ii. Scene 2: A Man Away from His People
 - iii. Scene 3: A God Who Remembers His Promise to Give His People a Place.

2. God prepares us for service by giving us a holy discontentment with our current place.

- a. **God showed Moses the need for a deliverer.**

Victor Hamilton pointed out, his “looking this way and that” might at first read seem like he’s being sneaky, but its the same language used by the prophet Isaiah to describe the Lord’s anger towards injustice:

[Isaiah 59:16](#) “16 He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him.”

[Isaiah 63:5](#) “5 I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation, and my wrath upheld me.”¹

Additionally, your translators do the work for you: this Hebrew word is not “murder” (*hrg* root) here, but instead, strike (*nhk* root)—the same root word for all of God’s plagues in Exodus.

Moses is acting here as a deliverer, but he has not yet been prepared by God to do so. He has taken matters into his own hands, but he has not acted unrighteously. In fact, this exactly how the Holy Spirit wants us to see this. Listen to Stephen’s inspired speech from [Acts 7:23-24](#).

Acts 7:23–24 ESV

²³ “When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel.

²⁴ And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian.

God gave Moses a glimpse into his future as a deliverer.

b. **He is without a place among the Hebrews**

Moses is confused: why is this violence not directed against the Egyptians? The man who was beating the other replied and the details matter here—they falsely accuse him of murder: are you going to *har-ge* (kill) me like you killed the Egyptian.

Stephen again with that inspired commentary: [Acts 7:25-28](#)

Acts 7:25–28 ESV

²⁵ He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. ²⁶ And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?’ ²⁷ But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?’ ²⁸ Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’

There is an irony in this question as well. This is going to be a regular theme in Moses’s leadership: who made you the boss, Moses? There will be those who even lead rebellions against him.

[Numbers 16:3](#) “3 They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?”

c. **He’s without a place among the Egyptians**

In this act, he severs all ties to his former aristocratic life in the palace. He chose to be identified with the people of God.

Hebrews 11:24–25 ESV

¹ Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 29.

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

d. **Notes on Moses's Leadership**

Moses sees his people's mistreatment and he has a holy discontentment with the status quo. That's step one on his preparatory path.

But I want to make a few notes about his leadership:

- i. **We see from this text that God's leaders are not democratically elected.** God's favor has rested on Moses since he was a "fine baby." And his people are not thrilled with his intervention. Yet, he will be their leader because he's been called by God to be so.
- ii. **We see from the text that God's leaders are not such on account of any aristocratic position.** Moses does not get deferential treatment from the Hebrews because of he is a prince in Pharaoh's house. Quite the opposite actually.

3. **God prepares us for service by allowing us to practice our for future work.**

- a. First, God allowed Moses to experience opposition to train him for leadership. God is using this exile as a training ground for his deliverer.
- b. Second, God allowed Moses to practice leadership before he lead the people of God.

4. **God prepares people to do his will because he keeps his promises to deliver a people to himself.**

Does God care about the Hebrew plight? Yes.

We see the passage of time, and God hearing the cries of his people. He is moved by them.

This postscript (v. 23-25) brackets [Exodus 1:1-7](#), and brings us back full circle.

- Moses is not the deliverer of the people of God. He is a vessel of deliverance through which God will save his people.
- Moses is not democratically elected. He's appointed by God for the task.
- Moses is not strong enough in himself to deliver his people. His actions net him trouble. He will need for God to do the work

This book is not about Moses. Its about God. Moses's life is not about himself, its about God. The last scene reminds us that our God is a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God. What does it mean that God remember? It does not mean that he forgot. Brevard Childs: "God's remembering always implies his movement toward the object of his memory.... The essence of God's remembering lies in his acting toward someone because of a previous commitment."²

Discussion Questions

1. In the sermon, it was emphasized how God was preparing Moses during his time in exile. Reflect on a time in your life where you felt "in exile" or distant from your calling. How might God have been preparing you during that time, and how can you see His shaping influences in hindsight?

² Brevard Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel*. Studies in Biblical Theology 37 (1962), quoted in Hamilton, 42.

2. The theme of "holy discontentment" was introduced as a way God prepares us for service. Can you identify a current area of holy discontentment in your life? How might this be pointing you towards a deeper purpose or calling in service to God's kingdom?

3. Moses's leadership was not rooted in his aristocratic position or democratic selection but in his faithfulness to God's word. Reflect on the leaders you admire. What qualities do they possess that align with God's design for leadership, and how can you emulate these qualities in your own spheres of influence?