

Core Study #2

Moses Flees

Passage: Exodus 2:11-25

Themes: suffering, the need for divine justice, and God's concern for his people.

Background and Summary:

This passage tells the story of Moses' descent from living a privileged life in Pharaoh's house to becoming a fugitive in a foreign land. Moses is driven out of his comfort zone as he begins a lengthy spiritual journey that eventually culminates in him shepherding the Israelites out of Egypt.

Leaders' Preparation:

Pray, and read through the passage a few times in a few different translations. Jot down any questions you may have as well as any interesting things that stand out to you. Here are some questions you may want to try to answer after you have finished reading and before you prepare your core study. It would also be a good idea to read a good Bible commentary such as *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus* by Peter Enns once you have prepared your study to make sure that you understand the passage and the historical context thoroughly.

1. What do we know about Moses at this point in Exodus?

He is an Israelite who has been raised in Pharaoh's household after his mother hid him and sent him in a basket down the Nile (Exodus 2:1-10) to save him from the slaughter that the King of Egypt had ordered (Exodus 1:22). He is probably about 40 years old (Acts 7:23).

2. Where is Midian?

Midian is located in southeastern Sinai and west central Arabia, flanking both sides of the Gulf of Aqaba. It was a dry and desolate land, very different from Moses' royal Egyptian upbringing.

3. What is the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

In Genesis 12:1-3, God tells Abraham (who was still Abram at the time) to leave his country and go to the land He will show them. He then makes these promises:

*"I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.*

*I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."*

You can read more about the covenant made between Abraham, his descendants, and God in Genesis 15.

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Introductory Question:

- Moses is one of the major figures in the book of Exodus. What do you know about Moses?

Discussion Questions (selection to choose from):

Read Exodus 2:11-25

1. Why did Moses flee to Midian?
2. What motivated Moses to kill the Egyptian? Do you agree/disagree with his actions?
"Moses is strongly affected by the Egyptian beating the Hebrew slave. The Hebrew word used to describe the Egyptian beating the Hebrew and Moses killing the Egyptian is 'nakah', which appears again in Exodus 5:14 when the Egyptian slave drivers beat the Israelite foremen for not fulfilling their quota of bricks... The beating of the Hebrew slave and Moses' response foreshadow the unjust treatment of the Israelites in Egypt and their eventual deliverance. Moses' actions here cannot merely be interpreted as reckless vengeance, but instead should be seen as a foreshadowing of the divine justice to be dispensed against Egypt."¹ But Moses has not yet been called by God to dispense His justice, Moses is acting on his own impulses.
3. What motivated Moses to settle a fight between the Hebrews? To rescue the girls at the well?
4. What is the covenant mentioned in verse 24?
Refer to the notes in the leaders' preparation section.
5. How does God respond to the cries of the Israelites in verses 23-25?
God responds in four ways to the cries of the Israelites: God heard, God remembered, God knew/was concerned, and God saw. Interestingly, the same Hebrew word for "saw" (ra'ah) is used in verse 11 to describe Moses as he watched the Israelites.

Application Questions (selection to choose from):

- There is so much injustice in our world today. How do you react to injustice? How should we react to injustice?
- Which of Moses' qualities do you hope to emulate? Which do you hope to avoid?
- God heard the cries of the Israelites, and He hears our cries too. In what ways do you cry out to God when you need help?

¹ *The NIV Application Commentary* by Peter Enns, page 79