

# life group study guide

## GRACE SAVES US

November 11, 2012



### Moses: Introduction

The first chapter and a half of the book of Exodus introduce us to: 1. the deteriorating Israelite situation in Egypt and, 2. Moses, the greatest character in the Old Testament apart from God Himself. He is one of the few characters of Scripture whose life is sketched from his infancy to his death. In character, in faith, in the unique position assigned him as the mediator of the old covenant, and in achievements, he stands first among the heroes of the Old Testament. The late New York City pastor, I.M. Haldeman, describes Moses this way:

*"The life of Moses presents a series of striking antitheses. He was the child of a slave, and the son of a queen. He was born in a hut, and lived in a palace. He inherited poverty, and enjoyed unlimited wealth. He was the leader of armies, and the keeper of flocks. He was the mightiest of warriors, and the meekest of men. He was educated in the court, and dwelt in the desert. He had the wisdom of Egypt, and the faith of a child. He was fitted for the city, and wandered in the wilderness. He was tempted with the pleasures of sin, and endured the hardships of virtue. He was backward in speech, and talked with God. He had the rod of a shepherd, and the power of the Infinite. He was a fugitive from Pharaoh, and an ambassador from heaven. He was the giver of the Law, and **the forerunner of grace**. He died alone on Mount Moab, and appeared with Christ in Judea. No man assisted at his funeral, yet God buried him."*

When you think of Moses, what character, acts, and/or achievements come to mind? What do you think this writer means when he calls Moses the "forerunner of grace?" In what way(s)?

Read Exodus 1:1–2:10 and consider this as you read. Why Moses? What qualities and flaws do you remember in his life? What did he do or what potential did he have to merit God's apparent special intervention to save him? How many instances of God's grace do you see in the text? In your opinion, what is the most remarkable thing in Moses' life?

### Background:

Remember that Joseph had brought all of his family to Egypt during a famine in Canaan (The story of Joseph, his brothers, and Egypt is told in Genesis 37-50). Joseph had become a high official in Egypt and so that government favored his family and they settled there and remained for 430 years (Exodus 12:40). Sometime toward the end of that period, the government changed for the worse (Ex. 1:8-22): "*Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done.*" And that's where our story picks up.

### Think and Reflect:

Just try and really consider the details of this story. You can't make this stuff up! If you are like me, you have probably read or heard this story so many times that it no longer seems incredible, but try to look at it as if for the first time. Think of the situation the midwives are put in. Their vocation is to try and help deliver healthy babies and now they are ordered to kill every male. Imagine their fear but also imagine their courage and faith. **Whom do most people tend to fear: God or men? Why? What did the midwives risk? What does the faith of the midwives say about the morality of "civil disobedience?" What does God think of their civil disobedience? Read Acts 5:29, 40-42. The apostles practiced civil disobedience**

## **life group study guide**

with an entirely different result (hint: flogging often resulted in death). Is there an ultimate reward to obeying God regardless of whether the earthly result is pleasant or painful? Read Hebrews 11:32-38. The results of faith and obedience could sometimes be wonderful and other times be horrible (from an earthly perspective). How is God able to work and save in both results?

Now, try to put yourself in the shoes of Moses' parents. They are slaves and poor. Mom is pregnant and delivers a really beautiful baby boy. He is perfect in every way! Joy and heartbreaking anguish at the same time. You have the baby you always wanted, but you know the government will kill him as soon as they find out. You can hide him for three months or so, but then what? He is getting too big and too loud. Now what? **What would you do? What hope would you have? Would you or could you trust God in that circumstance?** (I don't know if I could be honest). **Even in your wildest dreams, could you have expected God to save your son in such a way?**

**Read Hebrews 11:23. What does this verse say was the motivation for Moses' parents' actions? Do you think they expected God to save Moses, or were they willing to accept whatever God had in store, or something else? How did Moses' parents combine faith with action and what does that say about how faith works?** Moses is described in this verse as "no ordinary child" (NIV), "beautiful" (ESV), and "unusual" (NLT), depending on the translation. The Greek word always means "something of superior quality" or "extraordinary." God had created Moses for a purpose and He saved Moses in part through the faith of his parents but also through the mercy of Pharaoh's daughter (a pagan). **Can you think of instances in which God showed grace to you either through believers or through non-believers? What might that say about God? What might that say about all men and women, even if non-believers?**

So Moses is adopted by the princess and raised as a prince. **Take a look at Acts 7:20-22, especially vs. 22, "*Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in both speech and action.*"** Many ancient historians (Both Josephus and Philo, for example) confirm that Moses was very well-educated. **In what ways might this learning have helped Moses in his later work as the leader of Israel? In what ways might this learning have been a hindrance or barrier?**

God's grace working in the life of Moses is unmistakable. God had a plan for Moses even before his birth just as He had a plan for the prophet Jeremiah: "*I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart*" (Jer. 1:5). Because of His sovereignty, He was able to carry His plan out despite the efforts of the Pharaoh to kill Moses along with the rest of the Hebrew baby boys. Did Moses deserve grace? Not any more than we deserve it. That's why grace is amazing!

### Something to Remember

**Read Genesis 3:15; Romans 4:1-8; Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 11:1-6.**

We need to be clear on this: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Ruth, and all the other Old Testament saints were saved the same way we are – by the grace of God, through faith in God (and through faith in Christ since New Testament times). No one has ever been nor ever will be saved by works. And God is able and willing and desiring to forgive sin because He has always, even from before Adam and Eve, seen the cross.

**What can wash away my sin, your sin, Moses' sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.** The only difference is that the OT saints trusted God but could only look forward to the prophesied Messiah whereas His salvation has been fully revealed to us. **The very first prophecy of a Savior was made to the very first sinners in Genesis 3:15: a promise of a Child who would ultimately crush the serpent's (Satan's) head. Hallelujah, what a Savior!**