

Seeing Jesus in Every Story

**“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life;
and these are they which testify of Me.”**

John 5:39

Act 5

Moses: Israel’s Deliverer

Exodus 11–19

Prologue

Have you ever wondered what our Lord Jesus was doing while several thousand years of Old Testament history was developing? (Okay, maybe not but it’s a good question!) As we have seen in just a few episodes, the eternal Son of God was much more than a silent spectator before His incarnation and birth in Bethlehem. He has been present and active since before the beginning of time. We will see this especially now that we come to Moses and the exodus of God’s people from Egypt. Who led the Hebrews in their epic journey from bondage into freedom? In his letter to the church, Jude wrote that: “The Lord [Jesus] rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt” (Jude 5 NLT). As we go through these chapters, you will clearly see Jesus in every scene.

So let’s begin with a glimpse into an earlier scene that will set the stage for all that follows. There is a shepherd herding his flock over sun-scorched rocks and dry brush in a remote patch of wilderness. Imagine having to roust a dusty, smelly horde of sheep bleating and bumping against each other in habitual chaos. They are hungry and it’s your job to find them food. This has been Moses’ routine for forty years. He has no idea, as yet, what this is preparing him for. We’ll let Moses tell the story. “The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn’t burn up.” (Exodus 3:2 NLT)

God commissions Moses to lead *His* sheep out of slavery. It will not be easy, but God promises Moses that His presence will go with him all of the way.

The back story . . .

Moses’ own story is a remarkable chapter in God’s unfolding drama of Redemption. Several hundred years separate the end of Joseph’s story in Genesis and the beginning of Moses’ story in Exodus. Like Joseph before him, Moses was given a uniquely choice role by God. It’s as if God placed these two men—like bookends—at either end of the Egypt chronicles and wrote the script of their lives to bear a striking resemblance to that of our Savior.

✧ Cast ✧

Moses and Aaron

Pharaoh, the Egyptians and the Children of Israel

Read Exodus 11–12 & 19. Briefly note what stands out to you at first reading. Be prepared to share one of your impressions with your discussion group.

1. On the night of Passover, the Israelites (from the safety of their blood protected homes) heard terrible crying in all Egypt as the Lord Himself passed through in judgment. From this experience, how might they have described the presence of God?
2. At the base of Mt. Sinai, the Israelites (from the protective boundaries God set) watched as the Lord Himself came to speak to Moses. From this experience, how might they have described the presence of God?

Scene 1: Passover and Deliverance – Exodus 11–12:42 & 13:17–22

Egypt experienced one calamity after another. The people, the land, even the animals suffer under Pharaoh's pride. He makes—and breaks—insincere promises. Every time Pharaoh refuses to let God's people go he invites disaster on his own people. After nine plagues, stubborn Pharaoh digs his heels in deeper. This scene opens during an angry exchange between Pharaoh and Moses.

1. The Lord told Moses that one last plague would finally cause Pharaoh to let them go. In preparation, God instructed Moses to have the people ask their Egyptian neighbors for silver, gold jewelry and clothing. Does this seem like a strange request? Why would the Lord tell them to do this? For insight, read the following scriptures and note what you find.
 - Genesis 15:12–14
 - Exodus 3:20–22

In ancient times, conquering armies would plunder their defeated foes as a sign of victory. So, in addition to obviously practical reasons, why would it be significant for the Lord to provide these Hebrew slaves with *plunder* to carry with them out of Egypt?

2. Exodus 11:4 appears to pick up the scene that left off in 10:28 when Pharaoh threatens to kill Moses if he ever lays eyes on him again. Read Moses' response in 11:4–10 and briefly note what stands out to you.

3. God gives Moses and Aaron specific instructions for Passover in 12:1–13. Then God tells them this will be a yearly observance, along with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Keep in mind that—for Hebrew slaves waiting for deliverance—this first Passover is not just some religious tradition. They are preparing for what they don’t yet understand.

According to vv. 12–13, what *do* they understand will happen and what is needed?

Compare God’s instructions regarding the lamb with the scriptures that follow. Simply explain how the Passover lamb is a picture of Christ.

- Each family was to select a lamb without blemish. John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18–19
- The lamb’s blood was a sign; God would see it and pass over. Romans 5:9
- None of the lamb’s bones were to be broken (12:46). John 19:36

Sometime after midnight, Pharaoh summons Moses. “Get out!” he ordered. “Leave my people and take the rest of the Israelites with you!” (Ex. 12:31 NLT) We don’t know how long it took for word to reach every hut and hovel, but there is no time to linger—and this is no small endeavor! With 600,000 men plus women, children and an unidentified number of non-Israelites, it’s fair to estimate that Moses is leading an evacuation of some two-million people! Can you imagine?

4. As you read through Exodus 13:17–22, give some thought to the following questions:

- The shortest route would have been through Philistine territory but the Lord directed them another way. What did God know about the people and their readiness to deal with conflict?
- Is there a takeaway lesson here for us? What can we always trust the Lord to be doing for us, even when it appears He is taking us “the long way” around?

God gave the Israelites visible evidence of His presence with them. His pillar of cloud and fire gave them protection and clear direction. Whenever the cloud moved, the people followed; when it stopped, the people rested. At night the cloud became fire, illuminating the entire camp with the light of God’s own presence so they wouldn’t be in darkness. Think about it. Through forty years of wandering, God’s people were *never* without His guidance; and they were *never* without His presence!

“He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of cloud by night” (v. 22).

5. Wouldn't you love to have a visible pillar of cloud and fire to lead you through life? But Jesus has given us something much better! God's promise is still the same—He guides and guards us. Sit for a moment and ponder His presence with you...right now...where you are. What does this mean for you personally?

- John 14:16–18, 21

- John 16:13–14

Scene 2: Provision in the Wilderness – Exodus 15:22–17:7

For the Hebrew slaves, great deliverance was quickly followed by their first great obstacle in the wilderness. Pushed to the brink of the Red Sea with Pharaoh's army in fierce pursuit, there was no way out. God miraculously opened the sea and His people passed safely through on dry ground. No longer slaves of Egypt, they were a victorious nation! Moses led the people in a song of praise to God—their God. Can you imagine their praises echoing into the hills?

This scene, however, opens on a different note. The people have been walking for three days without finding water. Finally they came to a well—but the water was brackish and undrinkable. They named the place "Marah" (bitter) and began to complain.

1. Use Exodus 15:25–27 as your reference points to answer the following questions.

- How did Moses respond to their grumbling? What did God show him to do?

- What did God promise His people, and what did He require of them?

Two months later the nation of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin. Their food supplies were running short and the chorus of complaints started again. Scan through Exodus 16 to answer the following questions.

2. What did the provision of manna teach the people?

- Who were they really complaining against?

- Is there a takeaway lesson here for us? For more insight, read John 6:32–35 and briefly share your thoughts.

3. In 17:1–7 when the Israelites came to Rephidim, again there was no water. How did the people respond this time?

‣ What was God’s purpose in testing His people like this again?

‣ How did Moses respond this time when the people began to complain?

4. The people have been contending with Moses, but how were they actually tempting God?

‣ Briefly, what did God tell Moses to do?

Additional Thoughts and Observations

Rather than punish their rebellious unbelief, God identified Himself with that rock and took what they deserved. God told Moses to strike the rock and water would gush forth. They should have received judgment—instead, God provided much needed water.

Consider what the apostle Paul would later say about the identity and significance of that rock. Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–4 and share what insights you find there.

Scene 3: Smoke on the Mountain – Exodus 19

In this scene, Moses brings the multitude into the Sinai wilderness and sets up camp in front of the mountain. The people may have expected to rest a few days and resume their journey since this had become their routine. But Moses understands this will be more than a stopover. When God sent Moses to Egypt, his instructions were to bring the people back here to this mountain.

1. What is significant about this mountain and why has God brought them here?

‣ Exodus 3:1–6

‣ Exodus 3:11–14

2. As you observe Moses' activity in vs. 3–15, what does all the preparation tell you about this very important event? Briefly describe what stands out to you.
3. Moses set boundaries at the base of the mountain and prepared the people. He brought them out to the camp to meet God. This time it was more than a burning bush! Take a few moments to read through vs. 16–24 and do your best to describe the scene.
 - What additional insight do you get from Exodus 20:18–21?
4. By contrast to the fear the Israelites experienced in God's presence at Mt. Sinai, how do we as God's people approach Him today? Does this mean God is no longer to be feared? Why or why not?
 - Hebrews 4:16
 - Hebrews 12:24–25, 28

Additional Thoughts and Observations

God gave the Israelites visible evidence of His presence with them. He inhabited the pillar of cloud and fire that led them, and gave them protection. God came to Moses in a thick cloud (Exodus 19:9) so that the people could hear Him speak. This will not be the last we see of this Glory-cloud that the Lord inhabits. Could these appearances in cloud and fire, point to the pre-incarnate Son of God?

If you like, go through each reference and simply note what it says.

- He leads – Exodus 13:21
- He defends – Exodus 14:19
- He guards – Exodus 23:20–23 & 1 Cor. 10:1–4
- He speaks – Exodus 33:9–11
- He covers – Exodus 40:34
- He reveals – Exodus 34:5
- He ascended – Acts 1:11
- He will return – Revelation 1:7

Intermission: Pause – Ponder – Pray

**For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life
you inherited from your ancestors.
And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver.
He paid for you with the precious lifeblood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.**
1 Peter 1:18–19 (NLT)

As you memorize this passage, let it work into your heart and mind. Scripture meditation is like a good cup of tea . . . satisfying as it is savored. So give yourself time to savor God's Word. Write the scripture in the space provided and meditate on what it says.

Ask the Lord to open your eyes and increase your understanding. Jot down what He points out to you; keep returning here and adding your thoughts throughout the week.

Ponder what this says about God. Consider His character, attributes, work, promises . . .

Think about the redemption price God willingly paid on your behalf; and your value to Him.

Write your response to Him in worship and praise . . .

Epilogue: Seeing Jesus in the Story

Search to See . . .

By this point in our study, we have seen Jesus in the Passover, in His leading presence in the pillar of cloud and fire, and in the Glory-cloud on Mt. Sinai. We have seen Him in the provision of manna and in water from the rock. Each is an important part of Israel's deliverance and Christ's pattern of salvation. Now would you like to see another aspect of this unfolding drama?

The significance of the Exodus is carried into the New Testament and it takes place on another mountain (Luke 9:28–36). Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him to pray (they fell asleep). They woke up to see Jesus, gloriously transfigured, speaking with Moses and Elijah. The Bible states that they were “speaking about His exodus from this world, which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem” (v.31 NLT).

- Moses—representing the Law—was God's choice to lead Israel out of bondage in Egypt.
- Elijah—representing the prophets—who foretold of the coming Messiah and delivered God's people from following after false gods.
- Jesus—Who is the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets; His death would accomplish deliverance and true freedom for all who follow Him by faith.

It is a breathtaking, life-altering scene out of God's unfolding drama of Redemption! Jesus is the One who leads us out from the bondage of sin and into this lifelong journey of knowing God in a personal way! At life's end, He will usher us into His glorious presence and promised rest.

Make it personal . . .

In a thought or two, express what the following verses reveal to you about . . .

1. Your deliverance:

- Galatians 1:4
- Colossians 1:13
- Hebrews 2:14–15

2. Your exodus:

- 1 Peter 1:17–19

For you personally, what is the most significant insight you've gained from reading the story of *Moses: Deliverer*? How will you apply this insight in your life?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

