

## **“The LORD Prepares Moses for Leadership”**

By Pastor Rand Lankheet, [www.reformedtoronto.org](http://www.reformedtoronto.org)  
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Scripture texts: Exodus 2:1-15; Hebrews 11:23-27

**Introduction:** Part of being young, being children and teens, is that we are being prepared.

Prepared for adulthood. We're becoming prepared in every way: physically, intellectually, psychologically, socially./ And, of course, young people must also become prepared spiritually. As the years go by we all must grow in the grace and knowledge of the LJC.

We see that, also, with Moses. In Exodus chapter we learn how he was becoming prepared.

Particularly, the Lord was preparing Moses to become the leader of the Israelites, someday.

-Indeed, the Lord was preparing Moses, and teaching Moses. But we will see that Moses himself was active in becoming prepared for later life. He didn't just sit back, waiting for the Lord. But Moses also was actively preparing himself, by God's grace.

### **1. First, we see Moses becoming prepared in his early years.**

In Hebrews chapter 11, we read this about Moses' parents:

“By faith, Moses parents hid him (Moses) for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.”

Moses' preparation started with his own parents. And they, of course, had received grace from the

Lord. They were genuine believers, putting their faith, their trust, in the Lord. Remember that after about 350 years in Egypt, most of the Israelites had become comfortable there. Oh, things got bad recently, when the new Pharaoh came to power. And things got worse, when Pharaoh ordered their boy babies to be drowned 溺死 in the river.

But we read in Exodus 2, that Moses' parents disobeyed Pharaoh. The writer to the Hebrews tell us they disobeyed because of their faith, their heart-felt trust in the Lord.

We read in Exodus 2 that Moses' mother, hid her child. Perhaps she hid baby Moses in their own home; or perhaps with neighbours; we don't know.

But the baby grew older. As you know, when babies get older, many of them start to make more noise; they cry more often. So it became increasingly dangerous for M' parents.

In vs. 3 we read that Moses' mother made.....what? boys and girls? What did she make for baby

Moses, so that he could float on the water of the river? It was a little basket.

Interestingly, in the Hebrew original, the word used is the same word for Noah's ark. This basket of

papyrus is a kind of little ark 方舟, a miniature ark. That would float on the water. Like Noah's ark, the outside of it was covered with tar and pitch...so the water wouldn't leak inside. It would float and baby Moses would not drown in the water. Instead, he would be delivered.

Like Noah and his family....Hebrews chapter 11, says this about Noah: “By faith (trusting in God), Noah, in holy fear built an ark **to save his family.**” [Repeat.

Here we have this trusting mother, likewise, in faith, building an ark...to save **her family**. At first we might think it is only to save the baby, Moses. But as the story goes on, we know that through Moses, their whole family later will be saved. And all the families of Israel.

As they later are led out of Egypt by the grown-up man, Moses.

**What wonderful preparation, by the LORD.** Who planned everything according to his own saving purpose. That this little baby, was born of those parents, faithful believers.

**Application:** So, parents, today, remember, God has given you your children. For his purpose.

Oh, God's plan in giving Moses was special. Your child cannot be Moses. Yet, each child is part of God's plan. / And parents, please remember that in baptism the Lord is giving you His special sign and seal 印章. We don't dedicate babies, in our churches. That puts the emphasis on parents doing the dedicating. Rather, biblically, we learn that it is God who initiates his covenant. And the LORD who first gives His sign, His seal. He tells parents and all of us that our covenant children belong to Him. And He gives his promise of grace, in Jesus. That we expect, we anticipate, that these children will indeed be washed in the blood of Jesus, for the forgiveness of their sins. / So God promises. So God provides.

### **2. Secondly, as Moses grows up, we learn that he is also prepared by his education.**

Moses essentially was adopted by Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Pharaoh's own daughter pulled him out of the river. The name Moses, or Moshe, in Hebrew, means “pulled out,” or “drawn out.”

-Turn to [Acts 7:20-22. Read. As a child and teenager, Moses was raised in “all of Egypt's wisdom.”

Stephen says that Moses' wisdom was “considerable.” He gained that largely from his education. The ancient Egyptians had accumulated a large body of knowledge and wisdom, by that time. The Egyptian empire had been strong and prosperous 繁荣. Think of how the great pyramids 金字塔, still baffle 惊奇 engineers today. Today's engineer's wonder how those ancient people could have constructed such huge monuments, without machinery? With mostly human labour?

Now, of course, the world's wisdom is not perfectly aligned with God's wisdom...not in a spiritual, Christian sense. But, let us be clear in our educational philosophy 教育哲学. Never think that the Bible contains all knowledge, all wisdom. We must not expect the Bible to answer many of our academic and scientific questions. For that, we go to the scholars and the scientists. We look at their writings, their data, their theories. / Indeed, we must reject any ungodly principles which can lurk behind some scientific conclusions.

But, here's the point: as Christians, we must not be rejecting all of worldly learning, not even the majority of it. So, for example... We can learn many things from non-Christian mathematicians; we can teach our children from non-Christian reading books, we can make use of non-Christian history books. Again, we have to be careful about underlying principles 原则. But the data, the facts, discovered or written down or summarized....all the true facts ultimately come from God.

-All real truth is God's truth. [Repeat. Let us not be afraid of the world's wisdom, in that sense.

So in Acts 7, the man, Stephen says that armed with Egypt's wisdom, Moses became "**powerful in speech and in action.**" Indeed, that is also by God's grace.

But notice, that it is both the Lord at work, and also Moses at work. Moses given by God to believing parents. Moses spared from death, by God's plan, and adopted into Pharaoh's household. But Moses also was applying himself ....particularly in his education, in his listening and learning, in his growing powerful in speech and in action.

**Appl:** Let me speak a brief word to teens and young adults. Wisdom and good speaking, and powerful action, will not come automatically to you. You have to apply yourself. Many middle-aged adults will say this, with regret. "If only I had applied myself in school! If only...who knows what I could have become?" And indeed, many Canadians started when they were young, studying hard, or reading much. Or tinkering, all the time. Think of men like Ted Rogers Jr. He was one of the first Canadians to tinker 修补匠 with early transistors and radio. And then he started in broadcasting. Today, TO Skydome is named after him, and his company own hundreds of businesses. /And local businessmen, even in our own congregation, working hard. Applying themselves. Becoming successful in what they do./ Or those going to university... think of Dr. Frederick Banting, Canadian, first person, with his colleague Beck, to use insulin 胰岛素 on human beings...and what that led to. Youngest person to receive Nobel prize in medicine, age 32. -Not just famous 出名 people...but being successful in life, in ordinary work, in family life, in church.

But today, so many things distract our attention, as students, pulling us away from our study. Emails, Twitter, Facebook can easily take away 1-2 hours each day. Another hour each day wasted by You Tube. Texting which distracts us from our studies....

-Point is this: Moses applied himself diligently to obtain an excellent education. He also became powerful in speech. That meant he had to learn vocabulary, and grammar. Though Moses later said he wasn't a good public speaker, he knew how to speak properly in public. And the Lord made up for what he lacked.//

**3. Ah, but Moses also had his faults,** didn't he? Like all of us. He too was born in sin.

He inherited Adam's sin nature. So he erred, many times. **He erred 犯错,** he strayed from God's will.

-In Exodus chapter 2, we read about one event which occurred in Moses' adult life.

He saw an Egyptian master beating up an Israelite. Vs. 11 describes how Moses viewed that beaten man as a "brother." By that time Moses evidently knew his roots, that he was an Israelite by birth. Moses had to decide whether to stand on the side of the Egyptians, or to stand on the side of the Israelites. And by God's grace, Moses chose the right side. /

However, it seems he went to the extreme. In the fight, the Egyptian man was killed. Now, we have to be careful here. We don't know if God approved of what Moses did. I think not. Later God will say, "you must **not murder.**"

Unless killing is in clear self-defense or in a justifiable war, we as Christians must never kill.

Proverbs 19:2 says: "It is not good to have zeal without knowledge 一个人没有知识是不好的." It seems that as a young man, Moses had lots of zeal--and not yet enough of the knowledge of God.

In vs. 14 we read that later, an Israelite challenged Moses, who tried to settle an argument. "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you going to kill me, like you killed that Egyptian?" that man said. Moses realized his killing of the Egyptian was known.

-In Acts 7 the man Stephen gives an interesting commentary. [Read Acts 7:23-25.

Interesting, isn't it? Moses thought that all the Israelites would somehow recognize him as a leader, a deliverer. But they did not. You see, it wasn't God's time for that. Not yet. And, Moses was not yet prepared. He had to learn more, sense more of God, and trust God more.

-Moses was in error. In error in killing that Egyptian. Also, in error in running ahead of God.

But in God's grace, these events would be used to teach Moses. And prepare him for later service.

**Appl:** Everyone makes mistakes. And every Christian still has sin. We have our faults and failures even in old age. But, when we younger, we probably have more zeal than knowledge. And even as we get older, we easily run ahead of God. We have to learn more humility. More patience. /

But often through our mistakes and even sins, the Lord is re-directs us into new pathways. You thought you should be a schoolteacher, but maybe the Lord redirects you through circumstances, to become a businessman. / Maybe you

thought you should be a preacher, but the Lord leads you into plumbing. /And not just in our future careers, but in all of life.../some of our best lessons are learned through our mistakes, our errors. //

The Lord can even use our sins to correct us, to humble us, to cause us to become more faithful, more prayerful....

#### **4. So now we find Moses in new phase of his preparation. He goes into exile.**

Moses runs away from Pharaoh, in fear. Away from his adoptive family, and his biological family. He ends up in the land of Midian. In the Arabian peninsula 半岛. /

Listen what John Calvin writes, about Moses in exile. Out in the desert.

“...the Desert may well be called the school in which he [Moses] was taught, until he was invited to his more difficult charge.....Moses was certainly not yet ripe for the arduous 艰巨 contexts which awaited him; that, having been brought up delicately and luxuriously in the [Egyptian] court, he was not yet accustomed to the great and continual anxieties..” of being the later Leader of Israel.<sup>1</sup> So Moses was prepared in exile, out in the desert.

[Read Hebrews 11:24-27. Here especially we see how Moses' faith grew over the years.

Moses, by faith, had to persevere....his faith is especially developed in exile, out in the desert wilderness.

**Appl:** That points us to Jesus. Where did Jesus go, at the very start of his public ministry?

He left the comfortable home of his parents. He left his carpenter's job. And he went out into the wilderness. Into that distant, remote place. For forty days. Moses was in the wilderness for forty years....that's pointing us, to Jesus, for forty days, out in the desert wilderness.

**Illus:** If you have ever lived in a desert, or visited for a time, you will know what that feels like.

The deserts of California often gave me a new perspective on life and on ministry. The landscape is mostly flat, but mountains rise up in the distance. The air is dry, hot.

Not many homes, not many people...at night, especially, it is very, very quiet. The stars are so clear. You can experience some of that, up north, sitting along a quiet lake, or up on some rocky ridge. There, as if you are intent about it, you probably can hear God speaking to you, through His Word. More than when you are busy in the city. Busy in ordinary life. Busy with your daily tasks. Out in the wilderness, God can teach us so much.

**What preparation for the man, Moses.** And Moses points us forward, to Jesus.

Likewise, as a man, Jesus had to become prepared. Prepared, humanly, first, through his faithful, covenant parents. As he grew older, he was prepared at home, and at school. The gospels tell us that Jesus grew “in stature and in wisdom.” Jesus grew in God's wisdom, and yes, also in some of the wisdom of the world. /

And later, out in the wilderness, Jesus was especially empowered.

And as God's Spirit came upon him in fullness, in the wilderness, baptized by John.

-None of us will be Moses. None of us are even exactly like Moses.

But, from Moses, and his preparation, we can learn some lessons for ourselves.

How God, by His grace, according to His plan, also prepares us for greater service.

Children, teens, young adults:

Can you see God's hand at work in your life, through the years. Preparing you?

For young people, He's preparing you for adulthood. For years of even greater service.

For older people, well, God is still preparing all of us, isn't He?

Each day we live, we are still learning.

Even learning from our mistakes, our errors, even our sins.

As God continues to teach us...

And, all of us, ultimately, are being prepared for our eternal home. **LET US PRAY.**