

LESSON 9 || MOSES AND BURNING BUSH

SESSION SNAPSHOT

NARRATIVE PASSAGE: Exodus 1:1-14; Exodus 2:23-25; Exodus 3:1-15

GOSPEL FOCUS: John 8:48-59

STUDENT TAKEAWAYS:

- See God as the ultimate Deliverer, Who hears the cries of His people and rescues them from the oppression of the Egyptians.
- Understand that Jesus is the perfect Redeemer, delivering His children once and for all from the oppression of sin.
- Focus on the “bigness” of Jesus, and be moved by the fact that Jesus is so grand and mighty and yet loves them so personally.

OVERVIEW:

This week, you’re going to be picking up the pace with the big-picture story of the Bible. You’re about to get into one of the most important narrative threads in Scripture: God delivering His people out of oppression in Egypt. It’s a miraculous story full of God’s mercy and power but also a powerful echo of the Gospel. With God’s help, Moses was the deliverer of his people. In Christ, we see the perfect “Moses,” the ultimate Deliverer who once-and-for-all rescued His children from the oppression of sin. Moses represented God’s faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham. Jesus represents God’s faithfulness in instituting a New Covenant.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson’s main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you’ll be studying.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “CONTEXT”?** In every YM360 Bible study lesson, we encourage teachers to help students know *who* wrote a particular book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHY TEACH CONTEXT?** Grasping the big-picture view of God’s story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they’re studying.

EXODUS

- *Author:* While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Exodus, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).
- *Time frame:* The dating of the book of Exodus is a point of debate. The issue is that no one knows exactly when the Exodus occurred, whether in the mid-1400s BC or a later date around the mid-1200s BC. The writing of the book of Exodus would have occurred around those general dates.
- *Purpose:* Exodus means "a going out" or a "departure." Exodus was written to be a record of God's great rescue of His people from slavery in Egypt and His commands to His people, guiding them to live for His purposes in a new land.

JOHN

- *Author:* The Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle, son of Zebedee. A fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus, John also penned the Book of Revelation and the three New Testament letters that bear his name.
- *Time frame:* The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.
- *Purpose:* John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Son of God, the promised Messiah.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- **GETTING STARTED**– An introductory activity designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- **THE STORY**– A section featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- **THE THREAD**– A special emphasis where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- **WRAPPING UP**– An application-focused segment helping teenagers ask the question, “How am I impacted by what I learned today”?

GETTING STARTED

- *Goal:* To get students thinking about a moment that changed their lives.
- *Set-Up:* You’re going to be summarizing the life and impact of Lauren Hill, a 19-year-old basketball player who ultimately died of brain cancer. If you want to provide a visual to your story, do a Google image search for “Lauren Hill basketball” and arrange to display one of the images you find.

FIRST, ask students if they are familiar with the story of the college basketball player Lauren Hill and her struggle with cancer. If anyone is familiar with the story, have them share what they remember about it. Then, tell her story using the following summary (if you have arranged to show pictures of Hill, do so now):

- When the world discovered Lauren Hill, she was a freshman basketball player at Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, OH. She was also suffering from terminal brain cancer. Hill was thrust into the national spotlight when the NCAA agreed to allow Mount St. Joseph to play a basketball game two weeks prior to the original game date so Hill could play. Her cancer had reached the point where if she were to realize her dream of playing college basketball, it had to happen soon.
- Word got out, and 10,000 people ended up showing up for the game. It would be one of only a few games Hill got to play in. Her cancer finally took her life. She was 19 years old when she died, but Hill made the most of her tragic circumstance. She raised over \$1,000,000 to research the rare form of cancer she suffered from. Before she died, she was given an honorary degree by her university, named to the all-conference first team in basketball because of her courage and leadership, awarded the Pat Summitt Courage Award, and honored with a brick in the courtyard of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame.
- Before Hill died, she had this to say: “When I was diagnosed, I remember kind of feeling lonely because nobody understood. And now more people know about this story and the awareness of [my form of cancer]. I’m so happy that people know about it now and that we can get some research going and hopefully find that home run cure for cancer,” Lauren said. “And even though I’m probably not going to be around to see it, it’s going to help a lot of people. And that’s why we need to keep staying with this and not end it with this game and keep supporting research.”

SOURCE: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lauren_Hill_%28basketball%29, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/ncaaw/2015/04/10/lauren-hill-obit-cancer-brain-tumor/21393079/>

THEN, have students share any responses to the story. Explain that for Hill, both cancer and that one basketball game were life-changing. Explain that we all have life-changing moments, even if they aren’t on the same scale as Hill’s. Maybe mention a life-changing moment you’ve had in your own life.

NEXT, lead students in a brief discussion about what it means to have a life-changing experience. Ask something like:

- What are some life-changing experiences that you’ve heard about?
- Have you had a life-changing experience? How did it impact your life?

FINALLY, explain to students that in this lesson, they'll see a story of someone's life that changed in a moment. Say something like:

- We're going to keep moving forward in our journey to learn the big-picture story of the Bible. We're going to learn about Moses today and how God dramatically called him to a new direction through a pretty amazing life-changing moment. Let's take a closer look.

TRANSITION TO THE STORY.

THE STORY

- *Goal:* To see God as the ultimate Deliverer, Who hears the cries of His people and rescues them from the oppression of the Egyptians.
- *Set-Up:* Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find that a dry-erase board is helpful for jotting down notes but not essential.

FIRST, explain that in this lesson, you'll be looking at the story of Moses and the burning bush from the early chapters of the book of Exodus. If you'd like, use the Connecting The Dots section below to review or fill in the gaps between your last lesson and this one.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it to review or connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- Joseph was Jacob's favored son, who was sold into slavery over his brother's jealousy.
- Through God's upside-down plan, Joseph went from the hated brother, to the slave, to the servant of a master, to the prisoner who understood dreams, and finally to the leader of Egypt.
- Famine drove Joseph's family into the land where they lived under Joseph's blessing, favor, and forgiveness.
- Joseph's brothers were the first generation of Israelites who began to populate Egypt.

THEN, have students turn to Exodus. While they're finding it, provide a little context by referencing the Bible Background section. Explain to your students that as the biblical story picks up, the story of Joseph and his leadership are distant memories. In this passage, they'll see that there's a new generation and a new ruler, one who has forgotten the past.

Read or have a student read Exodus 1:1-9. Explain to your students that the Israelites have gone from a family living in Egypt to a great people within Egypt. This caused the new king in Egypt to see these foreign people (the Israelites) as a potential threat to him, his people, and Egyptian national security. **Ask the following questions:**

- **How do you respond when you feel threatened?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **Has there ever been a time when your fear of being challenged and hurt by others has caused you to hurt others?**
 - *Answers will vary.* Explain to the students that, out of fear, the new ruler of Egypt lashed out at the Israelites, as you're about to see.

NEXT, read or have a student read Exodus 1:10-14. Explain that the king of Egypt is going to send the Israelites into slavery. **Instruct students to look at verses 11-14 and pull out words that describe the rough atmosphere the Israelites found themselves in.**

- *Words may include: “Afflict”; “heavy burdens”; “ruthlessly”; “bitter”; “hard service”*

Explain to your students that it is clear from the passage that the Israelite’s experience in Egypt was not fun. Point out that the slavery in Egypt brought a response from the people. Read or have a student read the people’s response in Exodus 2:23-24. **Ask students to pick out words in this passage that describe the people’s response to slavery:**

- *Words may include: “Groan”; “cry”*

But encourage students to see that God had a response to the people’s suffering, a response that would change the course of history. Read or have a student read Exodus 2:25. Then, **ask the students what words from the passage describe God’s response to the people’s cries and groans.**

- *Words may include: “Saw”; “knew”*

THEN, take a minute to review with your students. Explain that the people’s situation led to the people’s response, which led to God seeing and knowing. Explain that this raises a very important question for anyone who believes in and follows God: How does God enter into the story? **Say something like:**

- **Many times in our lives, we find ourselves in moments where we are just like the Israelites. We are in over our heads, crying out for help, and seeking answers from God. But, we often feel like God is slow to act and come through for us. Knowing that God “sees and knows” is an essential biblical truth, but what is an even better truth is that God is a great God who rescues His people from their suffering.**

NEXT, explain that you’re advancing the story quite a bit. **Say:**

- **Moses was born as an Israelite in Egypt but was raised in Pharaoh’s household. Moses fled from Egypt because he committed a crime and was potentially struggling with living as an Israelite in the house of Pharaoh. We pick up the story after Moses had been living as a semi-nomadic herdsman.**

Read or have a student read Exodus 3:1-14. Ask students for their reactions, including how they might have felt. Explain that God definitely has Moses’ attention. **Ask:**

- **Why is it significant that God identified Himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?**
 - *Answer:* Moses was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Recall that God had made a covenant with Abraham to make him into a great nation, to bless his descendants, and to bring his descendants into the Promised Land. This same God was now speaking to Moses.
- **Summarize what God says in verses 7-8. Why is God’s reaction to what He heard important for Moses and for us?**
 - *Answer:* God had “come down” to deliver the Israelites into the Promised Land. God had not forgotten His promise to Abraham. He would deliver and rescue His people from their suffering. Remind your students that the same God that was faithful to Abraham and the Israelites is the same God that will be faithful to them.
- **How will God accomplish His rescue mission?**
 - *Answer:* God would lead Moses and rescue His people through Moses’ leadership.
- **As Moses heard that God would use Him to be a part of such a great thing, his reply was basically, “why me?” What are some excuses Christians make when God is calling them to follow Him by stepping out to be a part of His work?**

- o *Answers might include:* Sharing my faith with a friend might make them dislike me, standing up for someone being bullied might get me bullied instead, or choosing not to follow the wrong crowd isn't any fun.

Explain to your students that despite Moses' excuses for not doing what God called him to do, God gave him three key truths about His identity. **Say something like:**

- First, in verse 12, God says He is with us. In verse 14, God says He has always been. And in verse 15, God says that for as long as He "has been," He has been faithful. The name God gave, "I Am," is the covenant name for God. The name, Yahweh, comes from the verb "to be." By using this name, God is saying that He Himself is the central One who has been, is, and always will be. God reminds Moses that He is the One who forever reigns as God.

THEN, explain to your students that just as you've done in the previous lessons, you're going to explore where you see echoes of the Gospel in the story of Moses and the burning bush.

THE THREAD

FIRST, instruct students to turn to John 8. If you choose, while they are finding the Gospel of John, provide them with some brief context for the book by referencing the Bible Background. When you've finished, explain that Jesus and the Pharisees frequently clashed throughout the gospels. Explain that the Pharisees would try to catch Jesus in a bad situation that would cause the crowds to disapprove of Him. Jesus would always outsmart the Pharisees and speak truths that challenged all of their beliefs.

In John 8:48-59, we come into one of those classic arguments. The nature of the conversation is about the character and identity of Jesus. Read or have a student read John 8:48-59. When those verses have been read, lead students in a brief discussion. **Ask something like:**

- **In verse 58, Jesus makes a statement that ties back to Exodus 3:14. What does He say?**
 - *Answer:* He not only says He was there before Abraham, but Jesus claims to be the "I Am." The term God used to describe Himself for the majority of the Old Testament is what Jesus assigns to Himself.
- **Why did this cause the Pharisees to be so angry?**
 - *Answer:* Jesus is claiming to be God.
- **What does this mean for us? If Jesus is God, like He claims to be in John 8:58, that means Jesus is the same God who rescued Moses and the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. Jesus was the One in the bush, hearing people's cries and sending Moses to be a part of His rescue work. What thoughts or reactions come to mind when you process this truth?**
 - *Answer:* Allow students to ponder this. Help them see that Jesus has been in the rescuing business from the beginning! Jesus was active with God throughout all of time and history, not just during His years on this earth.

FINALLY, begin to transition into the close of the lesson. **Say something like:**

- **As we transition to the New Testament, God's rescue mission takes on a more personal tone. Instead of sending Moses to be the rescuer, Jesus Himself comes as the ultimate Rescuer of His people. He is born as a human in our broken world, full of suffering and sin. He lived the perfect and sinless life that we could never live. Then, in the ultimate act of rescue, Jesus died on the cross to break the chains of sin's slavery. He then arose from the dead, defeating sin, robbing it of its power, and making a way for His people to come into the true Promised Land: eternity in heaven with God. The rescue from Egypt was only a preview of the greatest rescue of all time, which Jesus bought for us on the cross.**

IF YOUR STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE WRAPPING UP SECTION.

WRAPPING UP

- *Goal:* To focus on the "bigness" of Jesus, and be moved by the fact that Jesus is so grand and mighty and yet loves them so personally.
- *Set-Up:* Give each student a slip of paper, something to write with, and an envelope.

FIRST, distribute the paper, pens, and envelopes. When each student has one, **say something like:**

- **As we wrap up, I want us to think for just a moment about how incredible it is that Jesus is as vast and powerful as He is and yet, at the same time, engages with each of us personally.**

THEN, ask students to list some of the most amazing miracles in Scripture they can think of. Remind them that creation certainly counts. As they call them out, encourage them to keep thinking. Interject how mind-blowing it is that Jesus, as God, had His hand in all of this.

NEXT, ask them to define the often-used term "personal Savior." Ask students what it means that Jesus is their personal

Savior (emphasizing the “personal” part).

THEN, make the turn to bring these two concepts together. Say something like:

- How mind-blowing is it that, as God, Jesus was in the burning bush with God the Father? Jesus was present when God sent the flood to cover the world. Jesus was with God when the covenant was made with Abraham. Jesus was in all of these things. And when He died on the cross to save people from their sins, He did so with you in mind. You personally. If this doesn't stop us in our tracks, we're doing this whole faith-thing wrong. We should be floored at how big Jesus is and yet how personal He chooses to be with us.

FINALLY, instruct students to take their slips of paper. Explain that you'll give them time to write one of two responses. If they were genuinely moved by the concept you just put in front of them, have them write a prayer of praise and thanks to God. If they found themselves having difficulty emotionally connecting with the concept, have them write a prayer asking God to move their heart and mind toward Him. Allow them time to complete their task. Then, encourage them to place the slip of paper in the envelope. Have them open the envelope later in the week as a reminder to follow through on their specific prayer of praise or petition.

If there are no other questions or comments, close the lesson in prayer.

- If you've purchased the corresponding devotional journal, remind students they'll be working through Week 11 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you're utilizing the digital devotions included in the Thread curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well that you want to share?
- Something that didn't work that you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns at feedback@youthministry360.com.