

### Reading Schedule for March 6-12, 2017

The story continues with the Book of Exodus. Jacob and all his sons are all in Egypt, and they would be there for a long time. The conditions would get very difficult, and God would hear the cries of his people. Spending the month of March in the Book of Exodus seems like a very appropriate focus as we head towards Easter. We will learn about the Passover, and that is very much a forerunner to Jesus, our Deliverer, whose blood would be shed on our behalf. Our focus this week is on Moses.

**March 6 – Exodus 2:1-10:** “‘Yes, go,’ she answered. So the girl went and got the baby’s mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.’ So the woman took the baby and nursed him.” (vv. 8 & 9) Isn’t it an amazing miracle that Moses’ mother would be reunited with her baby. God used her courageous act of saving and hiding her baby to begin his plan to rescue his people from Egypt. This would obviously seem like an insurmountable situation, and that her baby would surely die. But God does not need much from us to accomplish his plan for our lives. This short reading today gives me hope that God is always at work, and he can even use a pagan woman from Egypt to make sure the baby is protected. God’s plans for deliverance are right on track. How does this beginning story about Moses help you? I encourage you to meditate on the truth that God is in control and that you can trust him.

**March 7 – Exodus 2:11-25:** “When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.” (v.15) This seems like a negative turn in the story. But Moses wasn’t ready to lead the people. He needed 40 years of training in the wilderness. He had received much from his upbringing in Egypt, but not a deep trust in God. We get an inkling of Moses’ abilities in verse 17, as he rescues the daughters. Even a large group of shepherds would have been no match for the sophisticated expertise of a trained warrior from Egypt. I wanted to begin the Book of Exodus focusing on God’s hand in Moses’ life so that you and I might really absorb God’s ability to accomplish his plans. It looks like Moses will be insignificant for the rest of his life. But you know that is not true. How do you respond to this reading today?

**March 8 – Exodus 3:1-22:** “God said to Moses, ‘I AM who I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” (v.14) It would be impossible to leave this chapter and not highlight the name of God. Yahweh is derived from the Hebrew word for “I AM.” In verse 15 we learn about the connection that God has with his people through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God promised Abraham and his sons great things and many blessings in the Promised Land. There is so much in this one chapter to highlight. Moses encounters God; God calls him out; we learn about the amazing name of God, which can be translated, “I will be what I will be;” and God gives Moses favor with the Hebrew leaders in Egypt. What part of this story stands out to you? How are you inspired?

**March 9 – Exodus 4:1-17:** “But Moses said, ‘Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else.’” (v.13) It seems almost as if God is exasperated by Moses. Moses’ feelings of inadequacy were so strong that he could not even trust God’s ability to help him. This deep sense of inadequacy can affect all of our lives. When we face difficult or frightening situations, we must be willing to let God help us. This was almost a deal breaker. Sometimes I think when God wants us to do

something and we shrink back, he finds someone else. But his plan to use Moses was set, and Moses was the right person, even if he didn’t perceive it to be so. What part of this story gets your attention? Are there any perceived inadequacies that impede you from doing what God is asking you to do?

**March 10 – Exodus 4:18-31:** “And they believed. And when they heard that the Lord was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.” (v.31) I am sure that the Lord was pleased with the response of the people. He had chosen Moses, and they had accepted his leadership. The people realized that God was moving on their behalf, and they were so grateful that they worshiped the Lord. This is a good example to us. Like we read in Psalm 103, “Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” The people had been in great misery and oppressive bondage, yet they still responded to God with appreciation and worship. They could easily be cynical and hardhearted towards God. I love their response, and I want you to contemplate what their response means to you. How is your heart stirred by this reading today?

**March 11 – Exodus 5:1-21:** “You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw.” (v.7) You are most likely familiar with this part of the story. The situation for the Hebrews got worse, not better. We will learn that Pharaoh had a hard heart and would make things worse. I am sure this was very surprising to the Israelites since Moses had been presented to them as the leader who would deliver them from bondage. Their work became more difficult, and because of it God seemed very distant. There is no relief in these verses. Sometimes we will get a boost of encouragement and sense God at work on our behalf. But then the circumstances of life don’t immediately get better. The people in our lives become meaner, not more gracious. I am sure you can understand the disappointment for the Israelites, and the challenge for the Israelite foremen. This is not how I would write the script, but this is how God would prepare the people. How do you interpret what is happening in this part of the story? How might the Lord be speaking to you through it?

**March 12 – Exodus 5:22-6:27:** “Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and harsh labor.” (6:9) I am not surprised by this response from the Israelites. They were too discouraged to listen. The Hebrews didn’t want to hear any more promises because the last time they listened to Moses life only became more difficult. Setbacks in our lives can be used to turn our thoughts away from God. It is hard to trust in God when all the circumstances around you seem to be caving in. Only those who have a deep faith can obey when the task seems impossible. I am sure that many of you who are reading this can relate. But you know the end of the story, and I encourage you to turn toward God for strength in the midst of opposition and oppression. We are in a battle; a spiritual battle. We will need God’s help to persevere. How do you want to ask God to help you?

**Prayers: Pray for New Harvest, that we would pray 10 minutes a day, and that we would honor God’s principle of worship and rest – one day out of seven.**