

Exodus Chapter 2

Verses 1-2: Since Moses was born soon after the general decree of 1:22 was given (ca 1525 B.C.), the issuer of the decree was Thutmose I.

Exodus 2:1 "And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took [to wife] a daughter of Levi."

This is speaking of the mother and father of Moses.

It was very important to these Hebrews to not marry these worldly Egyptians. We see here that this was an honorable man and woman. They didn't move in and live together, they married. There were so many people in these families that they could marry in the family and still not marry a near kinsman. This marriage would be pleasing to God.

Notice here, that their specific names were not given. Probably, because they could fade into obscurity as Moses, their child, was elevated. These two would be named later, but just as the greatest things we do for God are, many times, not recognized; this is the case here. Their part in bringing the deliverer was paled in importance to the fact God sent the deliverer.

Verses 3-4: The careful actions of Moses' mother to construct the ark of bulrushes, to set Moses afloat close to the royal bathing place, and to have his sister watch to see what would happen, indicate a hope that something would work out right for the child.

Exodus 2:2 "And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he [was a] goodly [child], she hid him three months."

"Goodly" (beautiful) means "favored". For Moses' parents to hide him for "three months" until he was in safe hands was an act of faith lauded (in Hebrews 11:23).

This mother is proud of this healthy, handsome child that she bare. She stands against the powers of Egypt to keep him. She, as well as all the other mothers, was told to kill their boy children when they were born. Here we can look at these 3 months that he was hidden as if he were dead to symbolize the three days that the body of Jesus lay in the tomb as dead. She could look on this son and see his strength and his character. We do not read that she knew at this time that he was sent of God to deliver his people from great bondage.

Verses 3-4: The careful actions of Moses' mother to construct the ark of bulrushes, to set Moses afloat close to the royal bathing place and to have his sister watch to see what would happen, indicate a hope that something would work out for the child.

Exodus 2:3 "And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid [it] in the flags by the river's brink."

The word "Ark" in this case, a floating basket), alludes to Noah and, as in his day, served here as a vessel of divine deliverance. The basket was placed securely "in the flags" by the bank of the Nile where the current was slight, so it would not wash out to sea. It was also placed where the women of the palace would see it when they came to dip in the waters of the Nile as part of their religious ritual.

This mother's great love for her child brought her to the point of being willing to give him up, just so that he might live. She was aware of the bathing of the Egyptian maidens there. This was no accident she placed her son there. We can see similarities in this ark of safety made for Moses to the ark of safety of Noah. This mother put the baby in the ark. God sealed Noah in the ark for his safety. Here we see God's handiwork. He (God), puts the thought in this mother to do this special thing to save Moses for His purpose.

God even softens the heart of this Egyptian ruler so that he will allow the baby to live. Moses would not only live, but would get an education and would learn about Egypt and the Egyptians from the inside out. We see in all of this, that sometimes God uses wicked people to bring about His will. Pharaoh and his daughter accepted this baby as if it was a gift from the god of the Nile (their false god).

Exodus 2:4 "And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him."

Presumably Miriam, the only sister of Moses mentioned elsewhere (Exodus 15:20-21; Numbers 26:59). To have taken the part that was assigned her in this chapter, and possessed of much quickness and intelligence.

Here again we are not told the sister's name, but this was Miriam. She was actually guarding this ark to see that no harm comes to her brother. A child would be inconspicuous. She would carry the message back to her mother of the fate of Moses.

Exodus 2:5" And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash [herself] at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it."

"The daughter of Pharaoh": Has been interpreted by many to refer to the famous Hatshepsut (1504-1483 B.C.). Considering an early date for the Exodus, since Moses would have been born about 1527 B.C.). This would be during the reign of her father, Thutmose I (1525-1508 B.C.). She was his only daughter and when her father died she became queen, having been married to a half-brother, Thutmose II (1508-1504 B.C.). After his death, she had herself crowned king with full pharaonic powers, regalia and titular, refusing for nearly 20 years to allow her stepson Thutmose III (1504-1450 B.C.) to rule. But there is a good possibility that Moses was reared in one of the royal harems which was common in the New Kingdom period (1570-1085 B.C.).

The Egyptian kings maintained residences and harems not only in the great capital of Thebes, Memphis, and Rameses, but also in other parts of Egypt. The harem supervised a great deal of domestic industry, spinning and weaving done by servants. The children of harem-women would be educated (Acts 7:22), by the overseer of the harem.

Identified possibly as Hatshepsut or another princess; in either case a princess whom God providentially used to override Pharaoh's death decree and protect the life of His chosen leader for the Israelites.

She knew immediately that this child was a Hebrew because he was circumcised (Gen. 17:9-14). Her adoption of Moses as her son, along with the selection of Moses' own "mother" as his wet "nurse" (verse 9), are two ways that God preserved the infant.

It was not unusual for the Pharaoh's daughter to go and bathe in the Nile. The Egyptians thought this river had special powers. They felt bathing in the river brought back their youth. Actually, water was not plentiful in Egypt. When the rains filled the Nile, they had good crops; and during drought periods, there were very bad crops. They were so dependent on the Nile that they began to worship it.

She probably had 4 to 5 girls in attendance to her because of her prominence as a princess. Her maid spoken of here was probably the one who helped her dress and was very close to her. These flags mentioned here were just weeds that grew near the bank in the water. They were probably very similar to water lilies.

Exodus 2:6 "And when she had opened [it], she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This [is one] of the Hebrews' children."

The princess opened the ark herself; perhaps suspecting what was inside, perhaps out of mere curiosity.

"The babe wept": Through hunger, or cold, or perhaps general discomfort. An ark of bulrushes could not have been a very pleasant cradle.

"She had compassion on him": The babe's tears moved her to pity; and her pity prompted her to save it. She must have shown some sign of her intention, perhaps by taking the child from the ark and fondling it before Miriam could have ventured to make her suggestion.

"This is one of the Hebrews' children": The circumstances spoke for themselves. No mother would have exposed such a "goodly child" (Exodus 2:2), to so sad a death but one with whom it was a necessity.

We can easily see that Pharaoh's daughter did know that this child was a Hebrew. Here we see the instinct that God has given women to love babies. This daughter of Pharaoh was moved by the tears of the baby. We can see God's hand in all this; Pharaoh's daughter being at the river at the precise time, Moses' mother floating the babe in the ark at the exact time, and the baby crying

at just the right moment to touch the daughter's heart. This was part of God's plan to save Moses for the work God had ordained him for.

Exodus 2:7 "Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?"

His sister, Miriam, had bided her time. She had still kept in the background, but had approached within hearing distance; and when the princess observed that the babe must be "one of the Hebrews' children," was prompt with the rejoinder, "Shall I not fetch thee then a Hebrew mother to nurse him?" If the child was to be nursed at all, if he was to be brought up; a Hebrew nurse would be the fittest.

This was Miriam who spoke to Pharaoh's daughter. Don't you think that Pharaoh's daughter had some indication that this was a relative of the baby? Of course, Hebrew women had many children, so it would not be terribly hard to find one who could nurse this baby. This "nurse", I believe, meant to breast feed him, as well as take care of him.

Exodus 2:8 "And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother."

Jochebed must have been waiting near, eagerly expecting perhaps; while concealed from sight, watching the result, and ready to appear the moment that she was summoned. Miriam knew where to find her, and brought her quickly to the princess.

Exodus 2:9 "And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give [thee] thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it."

The princess adopts Miriam's suggestion; the child is to be nursed for her and is to be hers. She will place it out to nurse, and pay the customary wages.

Here we see the miraculous hand of God. Not only did the mother save the baby's life, but she now had her baby back. Even more amazing was that the mother would now be paid to raise her own baby. God always has the perfect plan, if we will just stand back and let Him do it. Remember, all the Hebrews were now slaves and just barely have enough to get by on, but Moses' mother was earning wages raising her own child.

It helped the entire family. It appears that in the early part of Moses' life, he was at home with his natural parents; and yet, Pharaoh's daughter had adopted him as her very own. Moses was probably just brought into her house and given all the privileges of a son.

Exodus 2:10 "And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."

"Became her son": The position of "son" undoubtedly granted Moses special privileges belonging to nobility, but none of these persuaded Moses to relinquish his naïve origin. Rather,

as the New Testament advises, his spiritual maturity was such that when he came of age, he “refused to be called the son of pharaoh’s daughter” (Heb. 11:24). The formal education in the court of that time meant that Moses would have learned reading, writing, arithmetic, and perhaps one or more of the languages of Canaan. He would also have participated in various outdoor sports, such as archery and horseback riding, two favorites of the 18th Dynasty court.

“Moses” was from the tribe of Levi. He was saved from Pharaoh’s edict to destroy the Hebrew male infants by his mother’s cleverness and by the intercession of Pharaoh’s daughter. He was raised at court and trained in the “wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22). He later fled Egypt for the land of Midian in the Sinai wilderness (Exodus 2:15). There he married Zipporah the daughter of Jethro (Reuel). After meeting God at the burning bush on Mount Sinai (Exodus 3:1-12), Moses returned to Egypt to lead the great Exodus of Israel back to the Promised Land.

In the wilderness of Sinai, he received the Law directly from God and oversaw the building of the tabernacle and the institution of Israel’s feasts and offerings. He finally viewed the Promised Land from Mount Nebo and was buried by God in the land of Moab at age 120 (Deut. 32:48-52; 34:1-8). He was a prophet of God (Deut. 18:18), and the author of the Pentateuch. He later appeared, representing the Law, at the transfiguration of Christ (Matt. 17:3-6).

In due time, princes (he was called “her son”), were given a tutor who was usually a high official at court, or maybe a retired military officer close to the king. The fact that he “became her son” may merely indicate he had rejoined the royal court. Having done so, he was in a position to receive all the privileges and opportunities of a member of that court.

“Moses” in Egyptian most likely means “born,” but the Hebrew equivalent means “to be drawn out.” God would later use him to draw His people “from the water.”

Amram, Jochebed, and their daughter, Miriam (with God's help), had saved Moses' life. When Moses was approximately two years old, he was weaned; and now his mother brought him to Pharaoh's daughter. He would have all the advantages of a prince, including the best education. "Moses" means drawing out.

Verses 11-15: This Pharaoh (likely Thutmose III), had been raised with Moses. The murder of a slave master by a privileged member of the royal family would not have warranted a death sentence, so Pharaoh’s desire was to “kill Moses” was about removing him as a potential successor to the throne. The “land of Midian” is in present-day Saudi Arabia, the land east of the Gulf of Aqaba.

In (verses 11-12 and 16-21), we see two injustices aroused Moses’ indignation with different consequences: one resulted in his leaving home, having killed an Egyptian who beat an Israelite; the other resulting in his finding a new home as an Egyptian who helped the Midianite daughters of Reuel, and in his finding a wife. Undoubtedly, Reuel and his family soon discovered Moses was not really an Egyptian.

Exodus 2:11 "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren."

“When Moses was grown”: The narrative skips over all details of Moses’ life as the adopted son of a princess prior to the event which led to his flight into Midian.

Moses lived through all his pre-teen and teen years in Pharaoh's temple training to be a prince. From (verse 11), we may assume that Moses knew he was a Hebrew. We see him, here, going out to see his brethren. He saw an Egyptian taking advantage of his Hebrew brethren.

Exodus 2:12 "And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that [there was] no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand."

This act of Moses may seem and indeed by some has been condemned as rash and unjustifiable; in plain terms, a deed of assassination. But we must not judge of his action in such a country and age by the standard of law and the notions of right which prevail in our Christian land; besides, not only is it not spoken of as a crime in Scripture or as distressing the perpetrator with remorse, but according to existing customs among nomadic tribes, he was bound to avenge the blood of a brother. The person he slew, however, being a government officer, he had rendered himself amenable to the laws of Egypt. And therefore he endeavored to screen himself from the consequences by concealment of the corpse.

Vengeance is mine saith the Lord. This was a hasty act upon Moses' part. He was not careful in that respect. This act, I believe, was in defense of the Hebrew brother. Whether justifiable or not, God would use this to further His plan for Moses.

Exodus 2:13 "And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?"

"The next day": The reproof was that of a legislator who established moral obligations on a recognized principle. Hence, in the following verse, the offender is represented as feeling that the position claimed by Moses was that of a Judge. The act could only have been made known by the Hebrew on whose behalf Moses had committed it.

It seems as though Moses loved his Hebrew brethren. He appears here to me, he was trying to make peace to keep these brethren from getting into further problems with the Egyptians.

Exodus 2:14 "And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known."

“He said, Who made thee a prince?” He challenged his authority. A man needs no great authority for giving a friendly reproof; it is an act of kindness. Yet this man who needs to interpret it as an act of dominion, and represents his reprover as imperious and assuming. Thus, when people are sick of good discourse, or a seasonable admonition, they will call it preaching, as if a man could not speak a word for God, and against sin, but he took too much upon him.

Yet Moses was indeed a prince and a judge, and knew it, and thought the Hebrews would have understood it; but they stood in their own light, and thrust him away (Acts 7:25-27).

“Intendest thou to kill me?” See what base constructions malice puts upon the best words and actions (see Acts 7:27-28, 35).

It seems to me here, that this Hebrew knew that Moses was a Hebrew as well. It also appears that he was jealous. He seems to have very little respect for Moses even though Moses was a prince. Moses had perhaps been good to them, and they probably did not fear him as they did the taskmasters.

Be sure your sins will find you out. Moses intended for no one to see him kill the Egyptian, and now even the lowly Hebrew knew. Moses would certainly have to run to escape judgment. Even though he was a prince, there was already bad blood between the Egyptians and the Hebrews. Moses was afraid. He, being a Hebrew, had little chance for a fair trial.

We need to take note of the fact here that God uses imperfect people to serve Him. Moses was no exception.

Exodus Chapter 2 Questions

1. What tribe were Moses' mother and dad from?
2. What tells us that Moses' parents were honorable?
3. Why do you suppose the parents' names are not specifically given here?
4. How long did Moses' mother hide him?
5. What act of rebellion, against authorities, did she take in this?
6. What do the 3 months symbolize?
7. What did his mother do when she could hide him no longer?
8. How can we compare this to Noah?
9. What good thing can come from Moses living in Pharaoh's daughter's house, besides saving Moses' life?

10. Does God ever use evil people?
11. Why did Pharaoh and his daughter readily accept this child?
12. Who watched to make sure Moses didn't drown?
13. What was her name?
14. Why did she wait by the water?
15. Why was Pharaoh's daughter at the water site?
16. Who was with her?
17. Who fetched the ark for her?
18. What was believed about bathing in the Nile?
19. What caused the Egyptians to worship the Nile?
20. When Pharaoh's daughter opened the ark, what was Moses doing?
21. What emotion did this stir in Pharaoh's daughter?
22. Was Pharaoh's daughter aware that this was a Hebrew?
23. What did Miriam suggest to Pharaoh's daughter?
24. Do you feel that Pharaoh's daughter knew that the woman who came was the baby's natural mother?
25. What two things does the word "nurse" cover here?
26. How can we see the miraculous hand of God in this?(3 things)
27. What immediate good fortune came to Moses when he became the Pharaoh's daughter's son by adoption?
28. Who gave Moses his name?
29. What does it mean?
30. How old was Moses when he came to live with Pharaoh's daughter?
31. What did Moses look upon happening to his Hebrew brethren?
32. Was Moses careful not to be seen? Explain.
33. What did Moses do to the cruel Egyptian?

34. What did he do with the body?
35. In what way would God use this?
36. Had anyone seen what Moses did?
37. What did the statement “who made thee a prince and judge” tell us about this Hebrew?
38. What important fact do we need to take note of here regarding God