

THE BIRTH OF MOSES – HIS YOUTH IN EGYPT

BIBLE TEXT : Exodus 2:1-25

LESSON 46 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 2:1-25

¹ And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took *to wife* a daughter of Levi.
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.
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.
⁴ And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.
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.
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.
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?
⁸ And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.
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.
¹⁰ And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Oppression of the Children of Israel in Egypt

1. The Egyptians become alarmed at the growing strength of the Israelites,

Exodus 1:8-10

⁸ Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph.

⁹ And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we:

¹⁰ Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.

Psalms 105:23-25

²³ Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.

²⁴ And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

²⁵ He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.

2. The hoped-for solution fails to relieve the anxiety of the Egyptians,

Exodus 1:11-14

¹¹ Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.

¹² But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

¹³ And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:

¹⁴ And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, *was* with rigour.

3. Pharaoh issues a stern edict to suppress the Israelites,

Exodus 1:22

²² And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

Acts 7:6, 7, 18, 19

⁶ And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years.

⁷ And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

¹⁸ Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

¹⁹ The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

II The Birth and Adoption of Moses

1. Jochebed, Moses' mother, conceals her baby, setting her daughter as a watch over him, Exodus 2:1-4;

Numbers 26:59

⁵⁹ And the name of Amram's wife *was* Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom *her mother* bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister.

daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

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 an Hebrew, one of his brethren.

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.

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?

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.

¹⁵ Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

¹⁶ Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew *water*, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

¹⁷ And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

¹⁸ And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How *is it that* ye are come so soon to day?

¹⁹ And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew *water* enough for us, and watered the flock.

²⁰ And he said unto his daughters, And where *is* he? why *is it that* ye have left the man? call him, that

Hebrews 11:23

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

2. The daughter of Pharaoh discovers and has compassion on the infant, Exodus 2: 5, 6.

3. Miriam fulfils her duty, providing a godly home for her brother, Exodus 2:7-9.

4. Moses is adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, Exodus 2:10;

Acts 7:20-22

²⁰ In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

²¹ And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

²² And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

III Moses' Choice and the Consequence of His Hasty Action

1. Moses makes a choice of forsaking the courts of Egypt in favour of the fellowship of God's people,

Hebrews 11:24-26

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

²⁵ Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

²⁶ Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Mark 8:35

³⁵ For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

Mark 10:29, 30

²⁹ And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

³⁰ But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16

⁸ By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

⁹ By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

¹⁰ For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

¹⁴ For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

¹⁵ And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

¹⁶ But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

John 4:32-38

³² But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

³³ Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

³⁴ Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

³⁵ Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh

he may eat bread.

²¹ And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.

²² And she bare *him* a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

²³ And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.

²⁴ And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

²⁵ And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto *them*.

harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

³⁶ And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

³⁷ And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

³⁸ I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

2. Grieved at the oppression of his people, Moses attempts a deliverance, Exodus 2:11, 12.

3. His actions being premature, Moses was not accepted by the Israelites as their leader or deliverer, Exodus 2:13, 14;

Acts 7:23-28

²³ And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

²⁴ And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

²⁵ For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

²⁶ And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

²⁷ But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

²⁸ Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?

IV Moses' Flight to Midian

1. Pharaoh's displeasure with Moses causes him to leave Egypt, Exodus 2:15.

2. Through his kindness to the daughters of Jethro, a priest of Midian, Moses is received into their father's home, Exodus 2:16-22;

Genesis 29:10

¹⁰ And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

Acts 7:29

²⁹ Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

3. The oppression of the Israelites continued, and they cried to God, Exodus 2:23-25;

Numbers 20:14-16

¹⁴ And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us:

¹⁵ How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers:

¹⁶ And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we *are* in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border:

NOTES

Many years passed between the events in our last Old Testament lesson, which closed with the death of Jacob, and the one we are now considering. At that time the children of Israel consisted of the 12 sons of Jacob and their immediate families -- a mere handful of people compared with the hundreds of thousands of their descendants living in Egypt at the time of this lesson, when their future leader, Moses, was born.

Conditions, too, had changed. A new Pharaoh, who did not

know Joseph, was on the throne, and he consequently felt no obligation toward the man who had saved Egypt in an extreme crisis. He turned a suspicious eye toward the herdsman of Goshen. History tells us that the Egyptians had suffered in their earlier history from the rule of a group of shepherd kings. Since the children of Israel were shepherds, they were suspected by the Egyptians of possessing the same nature as their former rulers; and if the control of the nation shifted to the Israelites the Egyptians feared the logical consequences.

The first step Pharaoh took to guarantee the security of his nation was to oppress the Israelites and make them slaves. In this capacity the former free and happy people laboured for many years, building cities for their captors. But this did not have the desired effect upon them. The more they were afflicted the more they multiplied and grew in numbers.

Afflictions are, many times, of great benefit to a Christian. In the history of the Christian church it can be seen that the persecuted Christians were the prosperous Christians. Not prosperous in worldly goods, perhaps, or in the wealth that is seen by the natural eye, but wealthy in the benefits and blessings of eternal value. The Psalmist said that it was good that he had been afflicted; that before he had been affected he had gone astray. In afflictions he had learned the statutes of the Lord; and in faithfulness to His own, God had permitted trouble to come (**Psalm 119:67, 71, 75** ⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. ⁷¹ It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. ⁷⁵ I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.).

The history of the Children of Israel is certainly no exception. The oppression in Egypt caused them to cry to God for deliverance. Had their lives been entirely free and happy they would never have longed for the freedom of the Land of Promise that was to be theirs in God's time.

Oppression failed to bring the desired diminution in the numbers of Israelites, so Pharaoh issued another decree, designed to reduce the threatening power of the slave people. But he was reckoning with a force that he was not acquainted with. The Hebrew women feared God; and God's law forbidding the taking of human life was firmly planted in their hearts (**Genesis 9:6** ⁶ Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.). Since they feared God more than man they refused to obey the commands of Pharaoh.

Using desperate measures, the final edict came, commanding that all boys born to the Hebrews be thrown into the river when they were discovered. Pharaoh probably felt he was accomplishing two purposes by this decree. First, he was eliminating the future strength of the Hebrew people; and second, he was offering human sacrifices to the river, which was worshiped as a god by the Egyptians. This, no doubt, was one thing that brought about the eventual destruction of Egypt. God, in Heaven, has always been stirred to judgment against people who not only did not worship Him, but who in addition sacrificed defenceless human lives in their idolatrous practices. He exterminated whole nations for that terrible custom.

What might appear to be sheer irony -- but which is the sure indication of the workings of God's hand -- is the fact that Pharaoh's edict of infanticide led to the rearing up, in his own house, at his own expense, and through his own direction, of the future deliverer of Israel. The Psalmist gives us some light on this method of God's providence, for in exalting God this sacred writer

said: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee" (Psalm 76:10). And here the truth of this beautiful passage is clearly demonstrated. Pharaoh's wrath and anger served only to inspire God's chosen people to deep penitence, eventually bringing the complete overthrow of the proud kingdom of Egypt, and the exaltation of God throughout the whole world (**Joshua 2:9, 10** ⁹ And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.¹⁰ For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.).

Moses was born into the family of Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi. His mother had faith in God; and seeing that her baby was a beautiful child, she hid him for three months. When it became impossible to hide him longer, she consigned him to the care of the God she loved and honoured. To do that she first had to have faith -- and almost unusual faith -- in the never-ceasing concern of God for His own. She put the baby in a little ark she had made and placed it in the flags that grew along the edge of the river. Her faith was honoured, for it was to that place that God directed the daughter of Pharaoh, whose maternal instinct was stirred upon hearing the cries of the tiny infant.

The wise suggestion, prompted by God Himself, that a nurse from the Hebrew women be brought, gave Moses to his own mother for the tender years of his life. Nothing but the hand of God could have brought this about. It meant that Moses would be brought up in the worship of the true God and be taught the precepts of the God of Heaven instead of the idolatry of that heathen nation. No doubt, his mother told him of the covenants and promises of God that eventually would be brought to pass, and the heart of that young man responded to those teachings when the time came for him to make his own decisions in life.

We read in the book of Hebrews that Moses chose wisely when he was confronted with the choice between the things of God and those of the world. Like Abraham, he was aiming at a goal higher than any human or worldly accomplishment. His ambition was to please God and to serve Him even though it cost him a kingdom, great wealth and prestige, and many comforts in this life. How few, then as now, are willing to make that kind of sacrifice!

But this great man, godly as he was, nevertheless was human; and God had to school and prepare him for his future work. Moses showed his need of that schooling in his first recorded act after going to be with his people. He did not await God's time or direction but attempted to revenge the unwarranted, cruel treatment a Hebrew slave was receiving at the hands of his oppressor. In his impatient zeal Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the corpse in the sand. The motives behind Moses' act were good. He knew that the bondage of slavery was wrong and felt that drastic measures were justifiable under the circumstances; but no matter how urgent the case, we are laying ourselves open to much suffering if we run ahead of God's time and plan.

Jacob took things into his own hands to get the blessing God had promised; and instead of letting God give it, Jacob sought it for himself. The result was that Jacob sought temporal things instead of the covenant promises and the spiritual blessings God intended him to have; and since he took things into his own hands God let him work them out for himself. He laboured many years to earn the temporal things that God would have given him in addition to the spiritual blessings that Heaven had for him. Moses' hasty act cost him years of toil, suffering, and privation, as

well as a temporary loss of influence over his people, the Israelites.

How thankful we are that we serve a merciful, loving, and understanding God. Read **Psalm 103:13-18** ¹³ Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. ¹⁴ For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust. ¹⁵ As *for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. ¹⁶ For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. ¹⁷ But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; ¹⁸ To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. How thankful we should be that if we get ahead of God, in our impatience and hasty zeal, if we obey Him He will tenderly lead us back, school us, discipline us, and teach us to follow Him.

Read **Isaiah 40:11** ¹¹ He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young. **Psalm 23:1-6** ¹ (A Psalm of David.) The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. ⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. **John 10:1-18** ¹ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. ⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. ⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. ⁶ This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. ⁷ Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. ¹² But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. ¹³ The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. ¹⁵ As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. ¹⁷ Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. ¹⁸ No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the names of Moses' father, mother, sister, and brother?
2. Why was Moses put in an ark of bulrushes when he was a baby?
3. What part did Moses' sister take in his concealment?
4. In what way did Moses' sister use rare and good judgment?

Would you say her judgment was her own, or did God direct her?

5. Who adopted Moses, and what privileges did that adoption give him?
6. What attitude did Moses take toward his royal home and privileges when he became of age?
7. What hasty action did Moses take?
8. What reaction in the royal circle did Moses' act create?
9. Where did Moses go?
10. After Moses' hasty act and departure from Egypt, what attitude did the Israelites take toward God?